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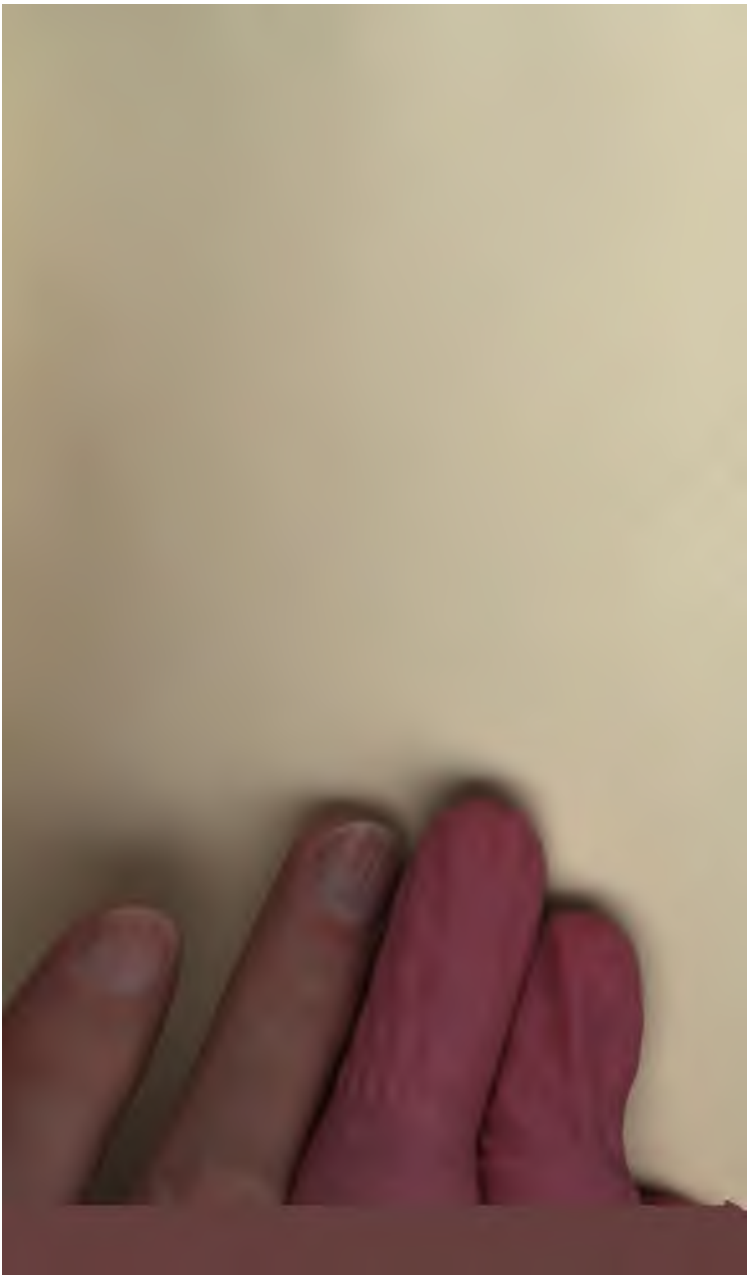

CHRISTIAN LESSONS

AND

A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Sermons

OF

SAMUEL ABBOT SMITH.

With a Memoir

By EDWARD J. YOUNG.

BOSTON:
NICHOLS AND NOYES.
1866.

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TO

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WEST CAMBRIDGE,

This Memorial

OF

ONE WHO GAVE ALL HIS STRENGTH TO THEIR SERVICE,
AND WHO FINALLY GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THE
CAUSE OF CHRIST AND OF
HIS COUNTRY,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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MEMOIR.

WHEN a pure, noble, disinterested, and devout life is closed on earth, some record of it, if possible, ought to be preserved. The world should know that such goodness has been seen in it. The Church must prize each new addition to its calendar of saints. The words which have been spoken, and the example which has been set, by some choice spirit, should be perpetuated for the encouragement and guidance of those who will come after us. It is greatly to be regretted, when any wise teacher, any pattern of spiritual excellence, is taken away, without some memorial being left behind.* A denomination may be well content to be small in numbers, when it is rich in scholars and in saints.

It is not easy to delineate a symmetrical and harmonious character, or to describe a simple and uneventful life. What words can express that indefinable charm which goodness, gentleness, uniformly produces? When this is manifested continually in little acts of

* Among those who deserve commemoration, for their devotion of mind and heart and life to the cause of Christ, may be named THEODORE TEBBETS, appreciated and beloved wherever he was known, but of whom no permanent memorial has yet appeared.

kindness, it is like the sunlight, which is ever shining and is ever felt by all, but which it is impossible to represent. If we were to write memoirs of angels, it has been said, we should probably have very little to narrate: it would all be in the line of purity and holiness, without any disturbing elements.

Samuel Abbot Smith was born in Peterborough, N. H., on the 18th of April, 1829. His father, Samuel Garfield Smith, was the son of Hon. Samuel Smith, the founder of the village of Peterborough, and a member of Congress. His mother, Sarah Dorcas Abbot, was the daughter of Abiel Abbot, D.D., formerly pastor of the Unitarian Church and Society in Peterborough.* If it be true, that we can judge of the character of a man from the character of his parents and grandparents, he could not have had better antecedents. His father was an active, energetic, enterprising man, engaged in manufactures, and possessed of great practical wisdom and integrity. His mother, a woman of rare loveliness, and of a sweet and holy temper, died when he was but little more than two years old. As he was the only grandchild, he was at once adopted by his maternal grandparents; and it was their influence, and that of their still surviving daughter, that moulded his character, and gave direction to his life. "My aunt Abby," he writes, "has been a second mother to me through my past life; and in my grandfather and aunt the loss of my parents was almost made up to me."

* See "Genealogy of the Family of William Smith of Peterborough, N.H.," compiled by L. W. Leonard, D.D., and Samuel Abbot Smith. Keene, 1852. pp. 11, 17.

The influences under which the delicate young child grew up were most favorable for his best development. Every thing about the home was calm and quiet, regular and simple; and an atmosphere of repose pervaded it, which, however, was not inconsistent with intellectual activity, vigorous thought, and careful culture. The grandfather, venerable, benignant, affable, who was now approaching his seventieth year, cherished with peculiar fondness and solicitude the little boy who was his pet and pride; and there sprung up between them a most beautiful relation, which continued uninterrupted until the patriarch's death. The grandmother, helpless, yet serene and submissive, was the object of the warmest affection and devotedness of her grandchild, whose principles of piety and disinterestedness were confirmed by the counsels and prayers and examples of those whom he reverenced and loved. "Both Dr. and Mrs. Abbot," says Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, "were of a calm and equable temperament and of a highly benevolent spirit, and were discreet and cautious in all their movements, and exemplary in their whole conduct. Mrs. Abbot, during several of her last years, was confined to her bed and her chair, alternately, by paralysis; and as I used, year after year, to visit the family at Peterborough, I always found her sitting in just the same place, without any thing apparent to indicate that she had not been stationary from the time of my previous visit. But, though I could perceive a gradual waning of her powers, I never witnessed in her the least sign of impatience, or even disquietude; and she never failed to greet me with that spirit of kindness and good-will which formed such an essential element in her nature.

It would be difficult, I think, to find a family united more closely in the bonds of affection, or constituted in a more orderly and beautiful manner, than was that of Dr. Abbot; and it is not strange that the fine, amiable, noble qualities which the grandson possessed, should have originated amidst such domestic influences as those into which he was thrown." Consecrated from his childhood, like Samuel of old, he grew up under the selectest influences; and it seemed scarcely possible that he should not be good.

The romantic and picturesque scenery of his native town, which is surrounded by hills with the river running between, on the one side the East Mountain and on the other Grand Monadnock rising in the distance, impressed itself deeply upon his mind, and attached him strongly to his birthplace, which he loved to revisit, and where he was universally beloved. To him, nothing was so crushing as to be on a perfectly flat plain; and he used to refer to the example of Robert Hall, who, after having been settled for several years in Cambridge, England, finally left the place because it was so level that he could bear it no longer.

He very early manifested those qualities which characterized him in later life. His mechanical ingenuity, which enabled him to manufacture various useful articles for his own house, showed itself in his fondness for building and inventing. When he was eight years old, he constructed an electrical machine, and also an engine which would throw water to the top of the house; and he afterwards built a summer-house in the garden with his own hands. Always making himself useful, he assisted in ploughing, planting, pruning, hoe-

ing, and in harvesting the fruits which were so abundant on his grandfather's goodly farm. He never lost the relish for these employments. Even after he had begun to preach, he writes to a friend: "I have been at Peterborough the past week, and worked in the furniture-shop two days, making book-shelves; and came off with honorable scars in the shape of a blister on each side of my right hand. Perhaps, when I have to give up my profession as you have had to, I will come and settle down with you as the village carpenter. I believe my genius runs to that rather than to farming."

He early exhibited also those moral traits which always made him a favorite with all. With a sunny, amiable, affectionate disposition, he was kind, dutiful, considerate of others, exceedingly conscientious, and all that those who were most interested in him wished him to be. Though idolized and indulged by his grandparents, he took no advantage, but felt, that, when others were so kind to him, he ought for that reason to be the more kind to them. When refused any thing that he wanted, he would not manifest disappointment; but he would take a book and sit down, and be perfectly happy. It was even said that it would be difficult to know how to punish him, since he always found good in every thing. There seemed to be in him no waywardness to be corrected, no bad habit to be surmounted, no selfishness to be overcome. But one instance is told of any mischief having been done by him; and this was rather from a boyish love of fun, than from any intention to do wrong. He gained the respect, as well as the love, of his companions; for, though slender and by no

means robust, he was not effeminate or childish. He enjoyed manly games, he excelled in leaping and running, and he generally came off best in the race. When he returned home in vacation, there was a new joy kindled in many hearts.

In 1836, his father having married again, Abbot went with him from Peterborough to South Berwick, Me., where he attended a private school, and also the academy; and his time, until his father's death in 1842, was divided between his old home at his grandfather's and his new one.

In 1843, being fourteen years of age, he entered Phillips Exeter Academy, where he remained two years, under the care of Mr. Gideon L. Soule. While here. he showed himself a quiet and unpretending boy, always diligent and improving. His recitations were never brilliant, but always finished, and enunciated with remarkable distinctness. No one stood above him in his class. He never felt nor required the government of the school, but gave his mind assiduously and joyously to its exercises. He was regarded by the Faculty and by his fellows as unfailingly true and trustworthy. He never obtruded himself upon others; but his unconscious influence, though he was younger than the average of his fellow-students, was great and always for good, When he graduated, the Salutatory Oration was assigned to him. His letters written at this time are marked by charming simplicity and naturalness.

I have just finished a composition on the subject, "The boy is father of the man." I wrote three pages on it. I made a mistake, at first, in writing the subject; and it read thus: "The man is father of the boy." I have no doubt of the truth of the last version of the subject: have you?

I suppose you saw, by the Catalogue I sent you, what part I have. I don't exactly like it: it seems rather silly to go on in the just same way they did fifty years ago, and say "nos salutamus" about six or seven times, and after each to have four or five lines of flattery or something worse, which we don't entirely believe ourselves. But there is this good thing about it, that there will be but very few who will understand it.

On account of his youth and delicate constitution, Abbot, after leaving Exeter, studied for a year with his grandfather, and entered the Sophomore Class of Harvard College in 1846, unconditioned. Here, though modest and retiring, he was quite popular, being a member of several societies, and enjoying the warm regard of all those who knew his social qualities, his hopeful and genial disposition, his playful humor, and his cheerful spirit. He devoted himself faithfully to his studies; and, in consequence of intense application, his eyes became so affected that he was obliged to give up reading in the evening; and, during the last term of the Senior year, he was compelled to be absent for several weeks from his class. Notwithstanding this, he held high rank, receiving a "Detur," a part in a Latin Dialogue, a Latin Oration, and the Salutatory at Commencement. After graduating at the age of twenty, on account of his sight he returned to Peterborough, where he remained a year, studying German and determining his profession. Having been predestined for the pulpit, he felt that the ministry should not be thrust upon him, but that he should enter upon it, if at all, from choice. In his correspondence, while he was an undergraduate, are the following sentences.

DEC. 17, 1848. — I have not yet made up my mind about a profession; but it must be decided with all due deliberation, as it is to be settled for life. I have struck out, from the list of professions I shall study, medicine and law, as I don't have much of a taste for either of them; so my circle of choice is narrowed down to civil-engineering and divinity.

JULY 15, 1849. — My next care must be to select a profession. Somehow or other, I incline to divinity, though I have some doubts as to its being suitable to me, and great ones as to my being fit for it. I believe, though, that the present age needs practical men for its clergy; men who can not only talk, but act on what they talk; and I fear that I should not be of the right kind: if so, it would be worse than nothing to attempt it. But, granting that I was good enough for a clergyman, there are some other objections to it. There are my weak eyes, which would not bear the study necessary to success, I fear; and my voice is not over strong, and might rebel against so constant use and abuse. I am glad that I have a year to settle all these doubtful points, and make my decision.

In 1850, Abbot entered the Divinity School in Cambridge, where he pursued the regular course of study; being excused, however, from Hebrew, on account of his eyes. During this period, he carried on a very interesting correspondence, "the most earnest I ever had," with Anna W., his cousin, in which were discussed freely subjects of the deepest religious interest to both. He wrote frequently also to George W. C., his townsman, classmate, chum, and most intimate friend, "who seems to me almost like a brother," who had commenced the study of law, but who, as well as his cousin, passed away in 1854. The subjoined passages

indicate his feelings, purposes, and opinions in these years of preparation for the ministry.

MARCH 2, 1850. — I feel as if I ought to satisfy myself, by my own searching, about certain points. I mean first to attend to the evidences of Christianity, then the authenticity, and then the doctrines and precepts. I have already made up my mind on them; but it has been, so to speak, by inheritance, and not by my own investigation. Now, I want to have my opinions well grounded, so that I can give a reason for them. If doubts and questions come up, they must be solved some time, and can be met as well sooner as later. And, if these important questions are fairly met now and answered, there will be little danger of change and wavering afterwards.

APRIL 18, 1850. — Probably I have passed through more than half of my life in these twenty-one years; for it is more than doubtful whether I shall live to see my forty-second birthday.

OCT. 13, 1850. — The studies here are very interesting; and the only trouble is, I have not eyes to do them justice. I can't study well more than an hour at a time, without exercise. After that time, my eyes begin to rebel, and I compromise the matter by exercising a little. This is good, both for eyes and mind and body.

MARCH 31, 1851. — I have just been reading Romans, and was surprised to see how new they seemed to be to me. Paul wrote a good many things hard to be explained; but I don't know anywhere in the older heathen writers so grand sentiments as he expresses. Some chapters would have as many good texts as they have verses.

MAY 31, 1851. — Shall not you and I have to guard against the opposite errors to which perhaps our professions incline us? The study of law is extremely conservative in its influence; and is not that of divinity rather to the opposite extreme? Perhaps in this case, as in most, the middle course is really the correct one, and the conservative-radical (if such can be) stands on the right ground. It would have been pleasant, if we could have chosen the same profession; but perhaps our choice as it is is the wisest. Nor are they so different. Their final end is the same, to serve God and man, and to develop our own minds; if we come to this end, it matters not which path we take of the many leading to it.

F., our good radical brother, mourns much over the calm views I take of subjects which to him are so exciting; and I believe that he is half right. I ought to have a little more mercury in my composition, or at least use faithfully the small allowance which I have.

I have been at home now for four or five weeks, and I have used the vacation for some good purposes. I have worked somewhat on the knotty points of dogmatic theology, the Trinity especially; and, I believe without prejudice, have come to the conclusion that this doctrine is not supported by Scripture. It is a mystery to me how it could ever have either been invented or believed.

APRIL 11, 1852. — Theodore Parker's theology I don't like; but there is a good deal in his practice, his active benevolence, which would put to shame those who think they hold to a more orthodox faith.

APRIL 28, 1852. — I finished my dissertation on the Arian controversy. It was not a pleasant subject to investigate; for it was a history of bigotry, of sectarian rancor, of sins committed in the name of Christ.

SEPT. 11, 1852. — What a wonderful thing is that rite of the Supper, so simple, and yet so impressive! I don't know any thing which has ever impressed me so much. It appeals to something in us as nothing merely human can.

DEC. 13, 1852. — I am writing to-day a review of some of Edwards's sermons. They are admirable sermons; at least, one of them, on the reality of spiritual illumination. The ideas in them are put with great force, and the arguments are capitally arranged. But in his sermon on "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" are some horrible things. I can't conceive how one man could write the two different sermons.

APRIL 30, 1853. — There has been quite a change in our household at Peterborough since I wrote you. My grandmother, who, for fifteen years, has been teaching us a lesson of patience and trust, has finished her work, and gone to her reward. We could hardly mourn for her release from pain; but how much we shall miss her smile and her pleasant greeting! It will seem as if part of the house is gone, when we no longer see her there in her chair. The large family is fast being re-united. Grandmother was the last of her family to go home.

JULY 18, 1853. — To-morrow I graduate; and then, what? I feel badly that I must then step out into the world, and buffet in its crowd. But why fear? There is real work to be done, and any earnest man can do it.

The succeeding letters, addressed at different times to different persons, define distinctly his theological position in reference to the prominent disputed questions of the day.

The point of difference between us is — is it not? — whether Jesus was the bearer of a revelation from God to

man; whether he was any thing more than the best and purest of philosophers. I think he was, and cannot reconcile the other supposition with his own account of himself. If he was all purity and nobleness and wisdom, it seems to me he could not have been deceived on such an important point as this. He must have known whether God was speaking to his soul, and whether he had a divine mission in the world to work out. The purest, the noblest, and most far-sighted soul the world has ever seen, the one which has held most intimate communion with God, and yet grossly deceived as to his relation to him! It seems to me impossible.

The miracles too. Jesus refers to these often, not as proofs of his great goodness and purity, but as proofs of his divine mission, of his Messiahship. It is strange that he should not have known the source of his power, and should have drawn so false a conclusion from them. Then, too, what reason do we have for thinking that they were in consequence of his perfect goodness; and that any one of us could do the same, if we were as good? If this were the true state of the case, we should expect that there would now be some small miracles wrought, answering to our poor attainments in religion; but the best man cannot heal the sick any more than the worst. Then, too, his own resurrection cannot be explained on this supposition. It certainly could not be his qualities of purity and goodness which raised him from the dead. Then it must have been a miracle wrought by God; and for what purpose? We say, to prove that Jesus was his inspired messenger to men. This surely alone would be enough to take him out of the ranks of common men, and prove his divine mission. He was the "only Son," as we think, in the sense of best loved, most obedient, faithful, and true.

But can we not imitate him? We can strive to do our humbler work, as faithfully as he did his more exalted one. He can still be our example. You ask about the text,

"Be ye perfect as your Father is perfect." Is it not plain, if taken with the connection in which it stands? Does it not mean, Be perfect in the exercise of benevolence, by doing good to all, enemies as well as friends? The word "as" means, not in degree, but in the same way. Understood in this sense, we can be perfect as God is perfect.

We differ, then, as to the mission of Jesus in the world. No doubt it is an important difference, and I wish we could think alike on that point: perhaps we may yet. But surely I think you earnest in your belief, and conscientious. I don't know that I can say I am "pained" at it: I certainly cannot find fault with you for exercising your right, nay, more, your duty, of thinking for yourself.

Beyond any special doctrine, I count it the main difference between Liberal Christians and the other sects, that we consider as Christians, and admit to full fellowship, all who, whatever may be their beliefs on minor points, accept Jesus as God's ambassador to men. The Baptist says to the Calvinist, "You cannot come to the communion, because you have not been immersed." The Orthodox says to the Methodist, "You cannot join my Church, because you do not believe in election;" and to the Unitarian, "You cannot join it, because you do not believe that Christ is equal to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is a person, also equal to the Father."

On the other hand, we own as Christians all who believe that God sent Christ into the world, to lead us to know and do his will. They may make mistakes on other points; but they are still Christians, and we have no right to shut them out from the fold of the Lord. When one would join my Church, he has simply to sign his name to a "confession of belief in Jesus Christ." The Calvinist, the Methodist,

the Baptist, the Universalist, and the Catholic can all come to the table of their common Master, and remember Christ together.

This seems to me a fundamental difference. But, as a matter of fact, I suppose that most Unitarians agree upon certain of these disputed points, which we consider important, though not essential. You wish to make up your mind upon these. Where shall you go to find what is the truth in regard to them? Christ is our only authority. It was he who brought down God's truth to men. The whole of Christianity must be contained in the words of Christ; the apostles did not contradict his teaching, neither could they add to it. The words of Christ, few as they are, are the summary of Christian doctrine. I would not undervalue the Epistles, but would merely say that the Gospels ought to be your first text-book. Your question should be, What does Christ say of this point? Let me recommend to you a little book, in which all the words of Jesus are placed by themselves. I will send it to you: please read it carefully, noting down each passage which seems to bear on the doctrine you are investigating, and, putting all he says together, see what he teaches about it. Go and sit at the feet of the great Teacher, and learn from his own lips what is truth. Let me map out your course of study in that book.

One great question of controversy is as to the nature of God. What is his character and relation to men? Is he a stern Sovereign, or a tender Father? Is he One, in the simple, intelligible sense of that word; or is he composed of the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," each of these equal to the other in every divine attribute? Is there any thing said about the Trinity? What does Christ say about it?

Again, what does Christ teach of himself? Is he the second person of the Godhead; or does he represent himself as being, not God himself, but the Son of God, whom

the Father sanctified and sent into the world to declare the divine will to men, and to draw them to obedience to that will? Can we believe him, when he says, "My Father is greater than I"?

What does Christ say of the Holy Spirit? Is it a person, and God; or is it the influences which the Father sends to his children? Here is enough to keep you busy for some time. I think, if you study the words of Christ thus, you will be rewarded with a firm and intelligent faith; and, moreover, I feel sure you will come substantially to those convictions which are called Unitarianism.

About this time occurred an honorable transaction, which illustrates his high-mindedness, and which was not made known until after his death, being first published by the lawyer who was employed in the interest of another party. The true statement of the case is this. His grandfather had given to Abbot a farm, to be held in trust for him by his father, who was to pay an annuity to Dr. Abbot. As it was inconvenient to collect the income from this property, Mr. Smith, having taken legal counsel, determined to dispose of it, and to invest the proceeds of it. He accordingly sold and conveyed it as an estate in fee, receiving a fair price for it as such. According to law, however, he could not convey an estate which he did not legally possess, and his right to this terminated with his life. It then became the property of Abbot, who could legally claim it, and annul the contract which had been made during his minority. The land had now become very valuable, from its proximity to a large manufacturing town; and it was estimated to be worth at least twenty thousand dollars. Moreover, the little property

left by Abbot's father had, by untoward circumstances, become considerably diminished, and even what remained was not considered secure for the family. There were four children to be supported and educated. Mr. Smith had died. Abbot was advised that he could legally cancel the agreement, and leave the purchaser to recover damages. The present proprietor was an entire stranger to him. But, though he was fully aware of what the law authorized him to do, he did not think that it would be right for him to do it. His father had intended to transfer his interest in the property; and if millions, instead of thousands, had been involved, it would have made no difference to him. He cheerfully signed a deed, renouncing all claim to the land in question; and, though he received no acknowledgment, not even thanks, for what he had done, he never repented of signing the release. He used afterwards to speak laughingly of his escape from riches, and to say how very probable it was, that, if his father had retained the farm, it would have been an injury to him; and that the struggles which the family were obliged to encounter had united its members more closely together, and made them all self-helpers. Abbot likewise relinquished his share of the inheritance to his half-sisters, when he became of age; so that he began life with that principle of self-sacrifice which characterized him to its very close.

At the exhibition of the Divinity School in July, 1853, he read an essay on "The peculiar character of the Gospel of John, and its relation to the other Gospels." After leaving Cambridge, he preached in various places, until in November he assumed, for six

months, the charge of the church in Dublin, N.H., where his uncle, Dr. Leonard, had formerly been settled; and he subsequently visited Buffalo. He received informal calls from several societies; but he finally accepted the invitation of the First Congregational Parish in West Cambridge to become their pastor. The ordination took place on the 22d of June, 1854; Ephraim Peabody, D.D., of Boston, preaching the sermon. On the 27th of the same month, he was married, by his grandfather, to Maria Eliza Edes, daughter of Samuel and Maria Edes, of Peterborough.

The following extracts from his diary and correspondence reveal the spirit with which he entered on his profession.

Oct. 3, 1853. — I preached at H—— two Sabbaths, and they invited me to give up my Dublin engagement and be with them. At N——, too, I believe they like me. I can hardly understand how my sermons are so acceptable, and must be on my guard against vanity. It would be a sin to preach myself, and not the gospel.

Dec. 2, 1853. — I confess I hardly comprehend the secret of my success hitherto, so much above my expectations.

Dec. 31, 1853. — I have much reason to be grateful. I have been more successful in my profession, much more so than I deserved, or than my talents would warrant me to expect.

March 4, 1854. — Yesterday, I received a letter from W——, asking me to come there for a month, to preach as a candidate. This I most certainly shall not do. I be-

lieve I estimate myself fairly; and I am quite certain that I am altogether incompetent to fill a place like that. I feel as if I could do some good in a country parish, and grow there; but a thing like this is altogether out of the question.

March 13, 1854. — Though H—— may not be so easy or desirable a place as some others in my reach, ought I not to be willing to sacrifice a little? It would be a good inauguration of my ministry to begin with a sacrifice. Have I a right to refuse it?

I saw the "Martyrdom of Huss" this morning, for the last time, I suppose; and right sorry I am for it. No painting has made so deep an impression on me as that. I always feel more devotional, and go away the better, for looking at it. It is not strange to me that the Catholics can defend the use of pictures in churches. I can conceive now how they might be very important helps in devotion. That figure of Huss somehow seems more to come up to my ideal of Christ in the garden in that last prayer, "Father, if it be possible," &c., than any I have ever before seen. But isn't there need of more martyr spirit and a deeper zeal in our ministers? Have we a right to pick the best parishes, the one that will pay the most and have the least to do? I don't like the notion of having ministers' brains set up at auction to the highest bidder. I feel more inclined to ——, not as the most agreeable place, or the most advantageous, in a worldly point of view; but as the one where I shall grow the most, and may do the most good.

March 25, 1854. — West Cambridge is a beautiful town, with some hills, which are quite an attraction to a Peterborian. Yet all the influences of the place would tend to make me a student, rather than a true minister. Now,

—— is a far less eligible place. But have we a right to pick the best parishes? Isn't there a question of duty about it? That is just what troubles me. I can settle at once that Cambridge is the pleasantest and easiest place; but am I most needed there?

In a year and a half after his settlement, the parish were called to pass through the trial by fire. On the last night of the year 1855, he preached an impressive sermon from Judges iii. 20: "I have a message from God unto thee;" and, in eleven hours after, the church was in ashes. The society met for worship in a hall; and at this time those members of it who lived in Belmont withdrew, and organized a separate religious society in that new town. Notwithstanding these discouragements, our friend cheered his people by earnest, kindling words; and, on the 1st of January, 1857, just a year from the burning of the old edifice, the new meeting-house was dedicated, with appropriate services.*

On the 20th of December, 1856, his cousin Frederic died, who had been his earliest playmate and his constant friend. † This loss afflicted him very deeply. "It has been the greatest sorrow of my life so far."

On the last day of January, 1859, his grandfather passed on at the advanced age of ninety-three. The relation between the two had been most intimate and touching. The old man had fitted him for college, and

* See page 181.

† Frederic A. Smith, M.D., son of Dr. Albert Smith, Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in Dartmouth College. It is greatly to be regretted, that Abbot's correspondence with his cousin, which was continued through nearly all their lives, as well as his letters to his step-mother, both of which would have been very illustrative of the boy and the man, have not been preserved.

had been his counsellor through life. His hopes had all been realized. After the ordination, he left his home in Peterborough, and came to live with his grandson in West Cambridge. They were now companions; and the younger sought continually to repay the attention and kindness which he had formerly received. When the venerable man failed, Abbot was with him; and, as the sands of life were nearly run, he lifted him on to the bed, and he died in his arms. It was with a beautiful expression of mingled sadness and resignation on his countenance, that he announced that the patriarch had gone so quietly to his rest and reward.

In October, 1859, our friend, being worn by constant labor and needing recreation, went, by the advice of his physician, to St. Louis, and was absent nine Sundays. Before he returned, he wrote, "I feel sure that I am all right for five years more," thus unconsciously predicting almost the exact time when he should be no longer here.

In the autumn of 1860, he was informed that he could receive a call from one of our largest and wealthiest parishes, if he would give the least encouragement that he would accept it. This he was unwilling to do.

In the spring of 1861, he was invited to take the charge of the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square, Salem. But he declined to go; and he resolved then, that he never would leave his people. From this time began that complete flow of love and respect toward him which the possibility of separation had awakened, and which continued uninterrupted until his death. He even told his parishioners from the pulpit, that he feared lest he should love them too well,

and lest their tokens of good-will should lead him to neglect his duty by withholding from them unwelcome truth.*

In September, 1861, he took into his family a poor boy, who had attracted his attention and who gave promise of some talent, for the purpose of aiding him in obtaining an education. For two years he supported and instructed him, sending him to school and afterwards to Exeter Academy, where he paid his bills for the first term; hoping that then he would secure what was equivalent to a scholarship, and be enabled to remain until he should be fitted for college. The result did not answer his expectations; yet he said, that, as long as he lived, he intended always to have one young man under his care, whom he could assist in a like manner. Earlier in life, at Peterborough, hearing of a poor boy who had a strong desire for an education, he went to see him, and persuaded his grandfather to take him into his family, while he himself heard his recitations until he was prepared for Exeter. This was a very difficult and disagreeable task, though his pupil proved a very successful man. Our friend considered it his duty to be constantly engaged in benefiting others; and, since there were enough who would care for their bodies, he devoted himself to the improvement of their minds and souls. He made it a rule to set apart one-tenth of his yearly income to charitable purposes, and he often exceeded this amount.

In March, 1863, he preached for three Sundays in Baltimore; visiting, in the mean time, Falmouth, Washington, and Fortress Monroe, and being the guest of

* See pages 208, 209.

Major-General Hooker at the headquarters of the army of the Potomac.

In April, 1865, he accepted an appointment from the American Unitarian Association to go as their agent and missionary for two months to Norfolk, Va.; the way having been opened, by the success of the Union armies, for the preaching of Liberal Christianity, and for commencing the religious as well as political reconstruction of the South. He had for a long time felt it to be his duty to go to the war; and, in addition to this, he thought that he ought, for the sake of his parish, to see more of the world, that, by enlarged experience, he might become a better minister. "I have kept myself too much at home; I need to go abroad more, and so be more useful to my people." If he had consulted his own feelings, however, he would not have gone. It was a sacrifice for him to leave his society; it was a still greater sacrifice for him to be separated from his family. He was strongly attached to his home. The letters he wrote daily, and sometimes twice a day, while he was absent, prove how strong were the ties which bound him to it. In one of them, he says, "I think this will be a good experience, and will do me good, if it does not anybody else. Don't worry about me. I shall gain in health by the change; but I dread to be here all alone for so long. I keep it out of my mind as much as I can, and think only of each day."

On the last Sunday but one before he left home, he delivered a sermon, from Heb. xiii. 1: "Let brotherly love continue;" and, on the last Sunday, he preached from the significant text, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24:

"I will not offer unto the Lord my God that which doth cost me nothing." We saw him for the last time at the National Unitarian Convention in New York, where he seemed buoyant and hopeful, looking forward with great interest to his mission. In a letter dated New York, April 6, 1865, he writes: "I mean to make my eight Sundays tell in some good work, which will repay the sacrifice. The prospect brightens as I go nearer. I think, from all I can learn, the prospect is good. We have had a splendid meeting. The denomination has redeemed itself. The feeling, ten to one, of the delegates, is for old-fashioned Unitarianism in belief, but with all charity for doubters and fullest liberty. The radicals are only an insignificant minority among the ministers. There is a splendid feeling of union and fellowship."

Leaving New York on Thursday night, he reached Norfolk by way of Baltimore on Saturday morning; and on Sunday he wrote: "Well, I am in the best of health, rested from my journey." He also addressed on this day the following letter to his people: —

NORFOLK, VA., SUNDAY, April 9, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, — My heart and my thoughts are with you to-day, as you come up to our pleasant church, where so often we have met and prayed together. In imagination, I stand in the pulpit, and look abroad over the pews, to catch a glimpse of the dear familiar faces, as you are gathered on this beautiful Sabbath in the great congregation. May I not here, a stranger in a strange land, have some share in your thoughts and in your prayers?

I feel as if I were your missionary, and in some sort ought to report to you; but as yet I have hardly surveyed

my field to see how large it is, or to which part of it I would better first direct my efforts. Even after I have done this, I may have very little to report. There may be no very important visible fruits to show for our two months' sacrifice. Be it so. I can only try; and, if tangible results should not appear to follow the effort, I must trust Him who never lets the good seed die, however weak the sower. The man may fail; but God's truth, never.

If I shall find that I need any supplies, or that you can help my work, I shall not hesitate to make my need known. I shall not probably find so much necessary, with headquarters here in this city, as if I were at the front.

May God watch over all our homes, and keep us safe from every danger!

Your friend and pastor,

To my People. Sam[l] Abbot Smith.

His first week was occupied in seeking out those persons in Portsmouth and Norfolk who would attend his services, in engaging a hall and making other necessary arrangements, as well as in visiting the hospitals and the schools for the freed people. The weather was very hot and rainy for several successive days; and he complained of headache and debility. On Saturday came the news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, which created an intense excitement; large numbers of paroled prisoners having just arrived from the rebel army, the people mostly sympathizing with secession, and the city being guarded by colored troops. On the next day, our friend delivered a forcible discourse, which was the last one he ever wrote, and of which he said, "I have the satisfaction of knowing that one good Union sermon was preached in Norfolk, the like of which has probably never been heard since the city was built."

On Wednesday of the following week, he went to Richmond, visiting the chief places of interest in the city and in the vicinity, walking to a hospital in the outskirts, and returning to Norfolk late on Saturday night. After this exhausting excursion, he preached twice on the next day, although the rest of the party were too fatigued to attend his ministrations. His choir also having failed him, he was obliged to conduct the services continuously, with no intervals during which he might have time to rest. On Monday, he felt so weak as scarcely to be able to walk to the post-office. On Tuesday, he was still weaker. On Wednesday, he was thought by the physician to be threatened with intermittent fever; but he was advised not to start for home, lest the disease should come upon him while he was on the road. On Friday, he wrote to one of his parishioners: "As to my work here, don't expect any thing of me. This wretched Virginia climate takes all the stiffening out of a man; and I have found that I have, in spite of myself, to walk slowly and do little, very little. You don't know how much I miss, not only my home, but my kind people, especially on Sundays: though I have a very interested audience yet it is not my West-Cambridge people. I shall be thankful, thankful to turn my face homewards."

He preached on Sunday, April 30, all day, for the third and last time; and so weak was he, that at noon he felt obliged to take a glass of wine, the first he ever drank in his life. He wrote also that he would return home at once, if it would not be deserting his post. On Monday, he was troubled with a cough, especially when he lay down, and with a high fever. His lungs,

however, were pronounced sound; and it was thought best, as he was not supposed to be in danger, that he should remain until he should be rid of his cough, since it would be suicide for him to encounter our east winds after being in a warm climate. On Wednesday, he addressed a second letter to his dear people. On Friday, he confessed to his family that writing letters had been very hard for him, since he had done nothing and been nowhere, and he was afraid that they would notice it, and be alarmed by it; but that they had reason to be very grateful that he was no worse.

On Sunday afternoon, May 7, realizing, doubtless, his situation, which seemed not to be understood by the physician, and having taken leave of his kind friends, he started suddenly for home. He came alone, suffering intensely on the way from exhaustion, being deaf and partially delirious from typhoid fever, and so feeble as to be unable even to procure a glass of water or to write in his note-book. It was almost a miracle that he reached home on Tuesday morning alive. When he entered the house, so changed was his appearance and his voice that his own children did not know him. He had been absent for five weeks, during the last two of which he had been prostrated. When it was known that he had returned dangerously ill, the anxiety and interest were intense among all classes. The poor, especially, were deeply moved; and one man said that he would willingly give up his daughter, if it would save his life. He lived only twelve days. During one of his lucid intervals, he sent a message to his society, as follows: "Tell my people, my dear people, that I have had eleven happy years with them, and trust

that I have done them some good. I feel that I shall work for them still, and perhaps more efficiently than here. Give my love to them, and bid them all good-by for me." His wife he endeavored to comfort and sustain, by telling her that he would be with her, and that God would take care of her. On the day before he died, he attempted to indicate what lesson from the service-book he wished the children of the Sunday school to use on the following Sunday; but he could not make himself understood. Afterwards, a heavenly smile irradiated his countenance, betokening the bliss which he had begun to enjoy. On Saturday, May 20, at twenty minutes past five in the afternoon, at the age of thirty-six years, he was translated.

The funeral services were held on Wednesday afternoon, in his own church; an address being delivered by President Hill, and prayer offered by Professor Peabody. Never before was there such a manifestation of deep grief witnessed in the town. The whole community seemed to share in it; and there was not one who did not mourn as for a personal friend. A very long procession was formed after the services, which followed the remains into the cemetery, where all that was mortal of the Christian minister and martyr was laid to rest. On the following Sunday, a discourse was preached by Rev. Dr. Stebbins, from the appropriate text, Eccl. xii. 5: "The mourners go about the streets." * For weeks and months afterwards, and until long after the frosts had come, his grave was kept covered with wreaths and beautiful flowers; and the

* This Discourse, together with the Address, and the Farewell Sermon of Mr. Smith, was published.

children of the Sunday school erected a tablet of white marble, on one side of which is inscribed,

OUR DEAR PASTOR.

And on the other, in harmony with his own words,*

SAMUEL ABBOT SMITH.
BORN APRIL 18, 1829.
DIED MAY 20, 1865.

"He went about doing good."

The esteem in which this good man was held was universal throughout his parish. He was indeed greatly loved by his people, who, in various ways, testified their appreciation and gladdened his heart by acts of thoughtful kindness and generous gifts. Being young and inexperienced when he was ordained, he was regarded rather as one of them, than as one over them; and if, in the first few years, when he was not fully known and had not yet matured, he made less impression, his influence deepened with every succeeding year, his character lent added force to his words, until, during the last part of his ministry, no preacher was more gladly seen in the pulpit than he; and he had the reverence and affection of every member of his society. This same strong feeling of attachment also existed generally among those who did not belong to his congregation. He won golden opinions from all sorts of people; and persons of the most opposite tastes and temperaments agreed in respect and love for him. There was scarcely a laborer in the place whom he did not know, and for whom he had not a pleasant word,

* See page 241.

and who was not ready to call down blessings upon him. In many touching ways did the poor manifest their interest and gratitude, and their desire to do something to honor his memory. In many homes, for a long time after he had passed away, his name could not be mentioned without tears. And beyond the limits of the town, in all our churches, where he had many friends, the sorrow which was expressed proved how deeply his loss was felt by the community.

Among his professional brethren he was a general favorite; no member of the Ministerial Association to which he belonged being more welcomed, as none could be more missed, than he. With the other denominations in the town he held the most pleasant and friendly relation. He joined with them in a union service on Fast and Thanksgiving days; at his request, their ministers all took part in the dedication of his new house of worship; a prominent member of the Orthodox Church expressed his own estimation of his labors and character by a very liberal contribution in behalf of his family;* and Rev. Daniel R. Cady, pastor of the Orthodox Church and Society, gives this testimony to his goodness and unsullied worth.

I am glad to learn that a memoir of Rev. S. A. Smith is to be published. We were neighbors for more than nine years, and our intercourse was of the most friendly and cordial description. Differing radically in our theological sentiments, we yet found wide fields of thought and action in which we could sympathize and co-operate; and I soon came to respect him as a man, and to love him as a personal friend. He won my regard by some qualities which he possessed in an eminent degree.

* Three sons and a daughter, with their mother, survive.

He was remarkably pure-minded. In the freedom of the most familiar conversation, there was no tone, no glance, no allusion, which betrayed a coarse mental association. I have rarely met a man of his age who impressed me so deeply with the feeling, that, through all his life, he had kept himself from the influence of debasing thoughts and corrupting ideas, as he.

He had unusual kindness of heart. A smile, a cordial grasp of the hand, a cheerful word, were ready for all. And these were evidently not put on, but were only the natural expression of what he really felt. He was sincere, and transparent in his sincerity. I think, of all his qualities, unfeigned and unfailing kindness of heart was the most prominent. One of the first things which specially drew me toward him, was seeing him come, with his horse and carriage, to take a poor woman to ride, who was ill with consumption, and not a member of his congregation. And this was a specimen of his daily life. He was eminently thoughtful of the sick and the poor.

He was a good citizen. He was far from seeking office; he had none of the petty ambition which is gratified by appearing to be busy and needful in public affairs; and yet, when any duty was put upon him, he was prompt and faithful in its discharge. I remember his saying to me, when elected a member of the School Committee, that "he had hoped the labor would not be laid upon him; but, as the town had chosen him, he did not feel it would be right to decline."

During the war, the government had in him a firm supporter, the soldiers a fast and generous friend. I shall never forget my last interview with him, just before he left for the South. I was ill, and was about to leave home for an absence of six months. He came to my room to bid me good-bye. He spoke with great interest of the army work which he hoped to accomplish. He had felt through all the war, he said, that he was doing little for the country,

little for its defenders. And now that the opportunity of a few weeks' service offered itself, he could not find it in his heart to refuse; and he thought that the experience he should gain would fit him better for his own ministerial duties. And so we parted. In the unforeseen and inscrutable providence of God, I was to return in the autumn, restored to health: he was to come back in a few weeks, only to die. Yet he leaves his family and friends the priceless heritage of a good name; and the citizens of the town, with no distinction of sect or of party, will cherish and revere his memory.

In his countenance, Mr. Smith resembled Thomas Starr King. He had a very youthful and almost boyish appearance; and, even after he had preached many years, he was supposed to be a recent graduate from college. He was young also in his feelings. He entered, with all the freshness and enthusiasm of a child, into every project which was presented to him. But he was not a child in his understanding. They who imagined that they were to be instructed by a mere boy, soon learned not to despise his youth. On one occasion, after preaching a very striking sermon, he wrote to a friend, "One of the people said, that some who had thought, when I came here, that I was too young, came to the conclusion, that morning, that I was old enough for them."

His natural utterance was very rapid; but his delivery in the pulpit was more constrained and artificial. This was, however, from no pretence or affectation, but rather from a desire to avoid the opposite fault. His style was simple, as was the man. He liked short sentences and Anglo-Saxon words; he used the most familiar phrases; he discarded all superfluous terms; and

he abhorred "fine writing." He felt that one should preach as he would speak, and not as he would read to the people.

He depended on nothing but the substance of his message to gain for him a hearing. He was earnest and impressive; and he strove, through conviction, to reach the heart. His sermons were plain, personal, practical, and often like familiar talks to his people. His frankness of speech was remarkable; as when, in speaking of the small attendance at church in the afternoon, he said, if the reason were the incompetency of the minister to make these services useful, then it was wrong for them to have such a minister, and it was their duty to obtain another, who possessed suitable qualifications. So, in a sermon on "Obedience to Physical Laws a Moral Duty," he said: "There are sins of the table. We can find them laid down methodically in all our fashionable cook-books." He wrote, as he declared,* always to meet some special want, or to remove some individual doubt or difficulty. He felt that a sermon should not be an ethical treatise, or a philosophical discussion; and that its aim should be, not to please, but to do good. "I believe," he remarked, in a paper read before ministers, "one great fault with us is, that we preach all our lives upon *subjects;* make dissertations and essays, instead of sermons. These may be well enough in their place; but their place is the "Examiner," rather than the pulpit. Ought we not to seek for *objects*, rather than subjects?" "Remind me of my sin, I pray you," he said to his people, "if I give you literary lectures, instead of religious sermons; meditations and words, instead of prayers."

* See page 202.

His views in regard to preaching on the exciting topics of the day are given elsewhere.* If he did not discuss these subjects in the pulpit, it was not from fear of man, but because he thought that he could best promote the cause of freedom and humanity in other ways. No one doubted where he stood in reference to these questions. He desired that his people should consider all their political duties in a religious light; and so wisely did he plead for righteousness in all things, that none could take offence, and those who differed most widely from him were among his truest friends. In the cause of temperance he was actively enlisted from his youth, feeling deep concern for those who were given to dissipation, and often using his personal influence to withdraw them from it. The war, however, from the very beginning, commanded his heart, his tongue, his pen, as it finally did his life. His stirring words to the volunteers are, in part, printed in this volume. His book, entitled, "West Cambridge on the Nineteenth of April, 1775,"† was originally delivered as an address in behalf of the Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society.‡ His patriotism

* See pages 197–201.

† Besides this Address, he wrote also a lecture on "Language," and one on "Newspapers;" he printed several lighter pieces in the "Contoocook," now "Peterborough Transcript;" and he published also a sermon on "The Work and Way of Life," from Prov. iv. 26, in the "Monthly Religious Magazine," for December, 1855.

‡ In this historical narrative, he says: "West Cambridge has not yet had justice done her for the part she took in these scenes. Histories and orations have had little to say about her. It has been the 'Battle of Lexington and Concord;' it should be the 'Battle of Concord, Lexington, and West Cambridge.' Within our town the battle raged fiercest; more than a third of the patriots who died that day fell within our limits. We have more precious dust garnered under yonder stone than any other town has treasured beneath its monument." — Pp. 4, 5.

was a part of his religion. He was untiring in his devotion to the soldiers, sending them gifts, visiting their families, and always advocating the cause which they had gone forth to maintain. His name is now inscribed on that illustrious roll of heroes, who have sacrificed all that they had for their country.

He was a model pastor. His relation to his people was one not merely of official duty, but of personal friendship. Every one's joys and sorrows seemed to be his particular concern. He had no favorites in his parish, and each one felt that he was specially interested in him. "It seems," he said, "as if other ministers had their particular friends; but I have none: all are equally near to me." How intimate this connection was between him and his people may be learned from his own words.* Considering his society as a large family, he had the same regard for all its members, and he wished them to feel a mutual interest in each other. He was constantly devising measures for increasing the activity and usefulness of the church. The Sunday school was his idol, and no portion of the parish were more attached to him than were the children. He was always interested in their plans, and thoughtful of their happiness; and their visits to his house were looked forward to, as eagerly as to any entertainment which could be afforded them. He was constantly endeavoring to promote their moral and spiritual welfare, and to awaken their religious feelings and convictions. "What can the minister do for the young people of his parish?" was a subject which he introduced for discussion in the Ministerial Association. He felt that he ought not to

* See pages 206, 207.

neglect those who composed one-third of his congregation; hence he preached to them occasionally of their duties.

He was a minister-at-large among the poor. He sought them out, and persuaded them to come to church. He called upon them in their homes, and befriended them whenever they were in need. He was no respecter of persons. Social position made no difference to him. He often took with him in his sleigh numbers of Irish children, saying that it was the only pleasure which they had. Among the poor, his praises are heard from every mouth. He had for a long time been contemplating a project, which he would have executed if he had lived, of establishing a mission-school, in the upper part of the town, for the benefit of the children of that neighborhood; and, in addition to his other duties, he proposed, when he returned from the South, to gather together in his house, on Sunday afternoons, after the public worship, such persons as did not attend church, and to hold suitable religious services for them there.* He seemed to feel that it was his duty to crowd into his life as much as possible, and, when any great want existed, to supply it himself.

He was unwearied in his attentions to the aged, the sick, and the bereaved. Many affecting incidents might be related of his frequent visits of sympathy and comfort, which relieved the monotony, enlivened the weariness, and dispelled the gloom of the invalid and the mourner. Never sparing himself, and with overflowing sympathy, he seemed literally to bear the griefs, and to carry the sorrows, of his people. This, indeed, proved

* See pages 204, 205.

too heavy a burden, and made it necessary for him, from time to time, to seek a respite from his labors. When it is considered that both his father and mother died of consumption, and that he was expected to be able to preach but for a short period, since it was feared that every year might be his last, it is astonishing that he accomplished so much, and that he lived so long.

His vivacity, equanimity, and sportiveness made him a most delightful companion. Taking a hearty interest in everybody and in every thing, his cheerfulness was contagious; and, like the sunshine, it gladdened and warmed all upon whom it beamed. He enjoyed life to the full; and his joy expressed itself in his sparkling eye, his radiant countenance, and his winning smile. When he received a favor, words could not express the gratitude which his whole frame spoke. He impressed strangers by the very tones of his voice, the grasp of his hand, and his affable, engaging, and cordial manners. To see him was to love him and to be interested in him. All considered it a privilege to have him under their roof; and his presence was like a heavenly influence. As a friend, he was faithful and true; and to his family, notwithstanding his many and various duties, he was constantly devoted, never speaking of his cares and trials, but ready to assume any charge, and feeling happy in so doing. How religious he was in his household, and how conscientious, both as a husband and a father, the following extracts from letters to his wife and to his eldest son show: —

I long to enjoy the new house with you. We have a home now, in a better sense than ever before. Let us

make all the inside and spiritual as good as the material part of it. Let us begin at the beginning, and not let there be the first wrong thing. For my part, I mean to begin with more methodical study, more faithful performance of duties, &c., &c. Let us dedicate it, first, to love; second, to discipline; third, to religion, transfiguring and completing both love and discipline.

I hope you will begin on dear Jesus' day* to do what he wants you to do, and to be his little disciple, and then you will be happy all your life, and will make those who love you happy; and the dear angels will be so glad that you are such a good boy.

I was glad to hear that you led the blind man out of church. I know it made you happy. It always makes us happy, if we do a good thing.

While I was at the hotel,† I had been talking a good while with some officers; and by and by one of them came and said, "You are wanted up stairs." I did not know but that there was some trouble, and said, "What?" He said, "The doctor wants you to come up to his room, and take something to drink." Now, Abbot, would you have gone? I told him, "I thank you; but I never touch it. Excuse me." What would you have done? Would you have told him you were a temperance man, if he laughed at you?

So unfailing was his amiability, that it is difficult to conceive of his being out of temper, or of his saying a harsh or unkind word. He always spoke well of everybody, and endeavored to find excuses even for those who had not done exactly right. He never lost his

* Written to his little boy on Christmas Day.

† Written in Norfolk, April 18, 1865.

natural artlessness and simplicity. He remained always a child. One who had not seen him for twenty years declared that he was the very same boy that he was at school. But, though he was simple-minded, he was no simpleton. Perhaps he was under-estimated, because he was so unassuming and retiring. His humility concealed his strength. He seemed to be the most pliant and yielding person; but no one was more firm and independent in following out his convictions of duty. He had great moral courage, joined with great practical wisdom and good sense. This, together with his purity, his disinterestedness, and his knowledge of human nature, fitted him for that most delicate and difficult of all duties, which, when necessary, he successfully discharged, that of being a peacemaker and reconciler of those who had been at variance.

His disposition to make the best of every thing, and to look upon the bright side of life, was so determined, that, when any real misfortune came, it was a common remark in the family, "I wonder what good, Abbot will see in that." Perplexities which would have troubled others seemed not to disturb him; and, wherever he might have been placed, his life would have been as smooth and bright and happy as it was. He had a firm faith in a special Providence, which made him confident that all things would issue well, and which led him to be resigned when his expectations were disappointed. He cherished a perfect filial trust in the heavenly Father. And he did not think that we should find the next world to be so very different from this, but that we should continue there the life and the employments which we have begun here. In a letter to his cousin Anna, he

writes: "I have felt sometimes as if I would willingly die, if I could know of the things after death, the lifting-up of the veil, the being born into a new life, and endowed with new powers; and then the meeting with old friends, and seeing Jesus and John, and the holy men of time past. And it is not a lonely place to which we are going when we die. It is the same path which our dear ones have trod before; and we go to meet them."

It may, perhaps, be said that we have alluded to no faults, and have therefore omitted an essential element of his character. We would not pretend that he was perfect; for we should be rebuked by his own words.* But we have inquired in vain, of those who knew him best, for his defects. Mr. J. Field, deacon of the Orthodox Church, says: "I used to hear of Mr. Smith in his boyhood and youth, in his native town. He was regarded by all as a remarkably faultless boy in every human relation. Some said he was faultless; others, that, if he was not entirely so, he came nearer to it than any other boy they ever knew." Dr. Ephraim Peabody, when asked by gentlemen from West Cambridge if this young man was suited to be their minister, replied, "You will want, perhaps, to have him preach sometimes about sin; but he knows nothing about it." From all quarters we have heard the same testimony: "he was a pattern man;" "the most perfect character I ever knew." A classmate says, "I should truly prize any memory of a ruffled temper in him; for his disqualification for anger was a failing in him, it seems

* See page 154.

to me." He certainly realized to us the character of Nathanael by his guilelessness, his purity, and his unblemished life.

And yet this goodness, which seemed to us a natural grace, was the result of inward struggle and of constant endeavor. Among his papers are found several memoranda, written for his own private use, in which we see how scrupulously he dealt with himself, and how he strove to counteract his natural tendencies.

April 18, 1850.—I think I am wanting in self-confidence. I don't value myself as highly as I ought. And there is a want of energy, also, in my character, which prevents me from pushing myself into notice as much as is necessary to success.

I am apt to speak pettishly about little things when I don't mean it, and thus give pain to others.

I am not considerate enough with regard to the failings of others, and too often speak severely or sarcastically of them. I talk too much about the news with regard to people, and give my opinion about their characters too freely. I am not so obliging as I should be.

I am not attentive enough to my grandfather when he reads or converses with me, and suffer myself to grow nervous too easily.

I have, I fear, very little religious feeling: though my head assents, my heart is not moved. I don't recollect when I have been deeply moved on religious subjects. I know not how to remedy this fault, for one can't manage his feelings. I am not reverent enough, but sometimes speak lightly of holy things; and, in hearing prayer, my thoughts wander. I have too much regard to what is thought of me; not independent enough of public opinion: it may not force me to do what I think wrong, but sometimes prevents my doing what I think right.

I will try from this time forth to correct those faults which I have before mentioned. I will try to improve my time more fully.

DEC. 31, 1852.

On this last day of the year, I will try faithfully to estimate the progress I have made in it.

Intellectually, I feel that my mind has matured, and that my judgment has grown better by this year of discipline. How much more might have been done, if I had but used the rich opportunities which God has given me! How much time I have wasted, or worse!

But it is useless to record progress. It will be better to estimate faults, and make resolutions against them.

FAULTS.

I am in the habit of wasting much time for want of definite occupation.

My mind wanders in hearing the prayers of others or the liturgy.

I do not pray enough, and with devotion enough.

I do not read the Scriptures as much as I ought, or think of divine things and religion.

I speak too much of persons, in common conversation.

I have not perfect purity of thought.

RESOLUTIONS.

I will try to improve my time better than I have done, and accomplish more in it.

I will try and command my attention in public prayer.

I will pray in the morning when I rise, when I commence my duties of the day, and before I go to bed; and will strive to put my heart into it.

When at Cambridge, I will read a chapter from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament, each day,

and reflect on it. To that and to prayer I will give at least twenty minutes each morning. I will think more of God.

I will be more guarded in conversation.

I will strive to keep my heart with more diligence.

These resolutions I will strive to keep faithfully through the coming year. SAMUEL ABBOT SMITH.

JAN. 1, 1854.

DUTIES.

Mental. — Subject my powers more to the will, and be able to write and think when I wish.

Domestic. — Be less impatient at others' faults and little annoyances.

Social. — More prudence in judging of others' character, and talking of persons; more liberality in pecuniary matters.

Professional. — Try to feel my sermons more, both in writing and delivery. My prayers, as far as may be right, more extempore; but guard against their being vain and at random. Try to feel always that God is indeed hearing me in my services.

Religious. — Read the Scriptures mornings, and pray before writing my sermons. In hearing prayer, not to be inattentive, but join as much as I can. Avoid making prayer a vain form.

Moral. — Not to praise, unless I really feel it; to be discriminating in my judgments, if I make them at all.

Writing to his wife, from St. Louis, in December, 1859, he says:

I have resolved to make my next year a useful one to myself and to my parish. There has been too much of

lazy, slipshod work thus far. Now I mean to do my best, and follow along the straight line of duty, if I can. Let us join in this, and you and I make next year for ourselves, and those about us, *just what it ought to be, and only that.*

I don't know as I ought to be away from my parish. You say, Mr. P.'s death is a warning to us not to overwork; but it seems to me a warning as well *to do our work.*

These memoranda, which reveal his inward life and spiritual experience, and which he never supposed would be seen by any one, are published for the sake of the encouragement which they give. We are too apt to think that the most spiritual persons were born holy, and did not become such by striving, watchfulness, and prayer. But similar confessions have been uttered by all the saints. To this estimate of himself may well be appended the testimony of those who knew him intimately from childhood, and who observed him through all his life. The annexed letter is from one who could fully appreciate his fine qualities:

To analyze Abbot's character seems like reporting music in words. Its beauty was in its simple, complete wholeness and purity. I think he was the happiest person I ever knew; happy, because he always accepted the position for which he was best fitted, and felt that his nature found its development there. We cannot make a striking picture of him, for there is no depth of shadow, no salient points to catch the high light: all is gently toned into quiet, serene beauty. God did not try him with fearful storms and burning fires, for there seemed no dross to purge away; but he was evenly developed by duties. What might have seemed heavy trials to others (as the failure of his eyes in the midst of his studies) he bore so sweetly,

that we hardly remember that he had crosses. Doubtless, in the depths of his own heart, he had struggles with doubt and temptation; but they left no mark upon the surface. I am sure he must have known spiritual struggle; because, when still very young, before he was ordained a minister, he gave great strength and comfort to a young friend of the most delicate spiritual nature, but who, partly from physical causes, suffered from morbid states of doubt and melancholy.

He had more humor than wit: a rich, racy enjoyment of human nature in its variety of manifestations came to him from his father's family. A perfect simplicity of character preserved him from any undue self-consciousness or saintliness. His goodness never reproached you; it was always mild, refreshing, genial. His truth was perfect; you were sure of him, sure of his statements; his own personality did not color them. Only a persistent optimism prevented his ever dwelling on the dark side. This cheerfulness was not the shallow enjoyment of a heart which shrinks from grief; it was the trusting faith which feels a Father's beneficent love so constantly, that every thing is beautiful in its light.

"They who God's face can understand
Feel not the pressure of his hand."

An anecdote of his childhood will illustrate the simple integrity of his nature. At Exeter Academy, the question was given out for discussion, Which quality is the most useful to the world, genius or application? It happened, that to him was assigned the advocacy of genius. This was by no means easy to him; for the perceptive and reflective faculties entirely preponderated over the imaginative, and he had nothing of what is specially called genius. I talked over the subject with him, showing him how genius opened the wide fields which patient industry toiled and cultivated; that the most persevering mariner might have coasted the shores of Spain for ever, if the genius of Columbus had not

dared to cross the trackless ocean, trusting to an idea. He took my thought readily, and wrote his theme upon it; but, at the last, he felt bound to state his own views, and added, "But, after all, I think application is more important than genius." I said then, "I am willing you should be a clergyman; for nothing will persuade you to advocate any thing but what you believe to be true."

He had a boy's natural love for stories of the Revolution and other heroic deeds. He was quite fond of pictures. His desire for knowledge was constant and universal. Always open to the reception of truth, he was always an interesting companion, equally willing to impart or receive information, with no thought of display. His life was serene, useful, happy, accepting the humblest duties, gathering joy from the simplest pleasures, justifying life here by its beauty and meaning, even if that were all, and yet always ennobled by a light caught from heaven, always suggesting higher aims and purposes that only God and eternity could answer.

Another, who stood in a yet nearer relation, and who watched his development and progress from youth to manhood, writes:

His name had been with us, through his whole life, a synonyme for all beautiful and heavenly graces. There were no angles, no sharpnesses, no faults, though many individualities. Every thing about him, from his earliest years, was a harmony, with no single discord; and so pure and sinless was his nature, that it was often playfully discussed in the family circle, whether it was really a merit for Abbot to be so much better than the rest of us, seeing he inherited a nature so much more exalted and pure than ours. To us who had lived in his sunny presence, rejoiced in his unselfish devotion and love, and felt the safety and protection of his strong, manly spirit, he could only be

Abbot, *sui generis*, not to be compared with any one else, or described. Every heart must go out to him, and justice would seem to strangers exaggerated praise. I recollect when a sister, after describing the many excellences of a very dear friend, wished to sum them up in the highest praise, she wrote to me, "He is almost as good as Abbot: no one, you know, can come quite up to him; but he approaches nearer than any one I have ever seen." That was our family feeling; and we only knew, that, love others as we might, there could be but one Abbot, and we must all struggle very desperately to approach near the lofty purity and elevation of his character. And yet he was simple always, and free and easy as the veriest child, entering into all the pursuits and interests of the family, and doing constantly little and great kindnesses to all its members. Was it not wonderful, how this simplicity was preserved to the very last moment of life? How humble he was; how unconscious of his mental and moral superiority; how glad the simplest pleasures and kindnesses would make him; and how even childlike he would seem and express himself in his naturalness!

He found always the brightest side of every event; and so unconquerable was his cheerfulness, that we could imagine no situation from which Abbot would not extract something pleasant. I recollect, after a very busy season, and at a time which seemed to his friends the most unpropitious possible for such a visitation, he was attacked with scarlet fever. Some one condoled with him, and regretted that it would so frustrate his many plans. "Oh!" said Abbot, "it was just what I needed: the rest and quiet will do me much good;" and his patience and sweetness did make it salutary. Who but he would have looked for and found this in that ugly disease?

It struck me as remarkable, when I looked at him in his last sleep, the little change in the sweet expression of his face time had wrought. There were no hard lines, no deep

furrows; but it was a beautiful outgrowth and maturing of the innocent child.

He inherited from his father a strong love of mechanical inventions and discoveries; and this was so marked, that an uncle, a man of great practical wisdom, used to say, "Do not hinder Abbot from following the bent of his genius, which is for mechanics." When a boy, the scientific portion of his father's library was chiefly used and studied, and all sorts of experiments made in machinery, steam-engines, and chemical combinations. At eight years of age, he commenced the study of the Greek language, as the basis of his education; and he has often told me how easy and delightful this early mastery of the language made it to him through life. Latin, too, he learned early and thoroughly; and well do I remember the beautiful picture of Abbot and his grandfather reading together the works of Cicero in the original, the year of Dr. Abbot's death: the calm, benevolent, and sanctified face of the octogenarian; and the bright, radiant countenance of the young man for whom he had done so much, as he read aloud to him the glowing pages. Both are now studying in a higher school; and, on that loftier plane, may not that sainted old man, whose very presence was a benediction, and whose calm wisdom and divine trust were never surpassed, be carrying to still purer and more exalted heights the many young men he trained and educated here?

Abbot, although so gentle and quiet, was fond of boyish sports, and, wherever he went, was a favorite with even the roughest of his sex. There was about him, from a child, a positiveness, a manliness, and an unflinching moral rectitude, which protected him from the insult and injury it was well known he would never return. The preparatory course at Exeter was passed through without a stain on his character. When he left, one of the teachers said to me, "You have no anxiety or fear for Abbot, I suppose?" "Not one," was the answer, "for any thing but his health:

who ever thought of fearing that Abbot could yield to a temptation to do wrong?" And he never did. As faithful in his studies as in all his duties, he conscientiously committed every lesson and mastered every difficulty, so that he entered college unconditioned, and graduated with high honor. His grandfather educated Abbot, and, on his leaving the Divinity School, gave him a receipt in full for all the money paid for him. No expense was spared to furnish him with all helps to literary excellence; and it was Dr. Abbot's rare privilege to see the fruits of his wise investment. Abbot, at the age of twenty-one, assumed the guardianship of his three sisters, their father dying when the youngest was only a year old. This care continued until they came of age, and was as judicious and wise as all the other acts of his beautiful life. One of them, the one Abbot most dearly loved, was in the spirit-land to welcome him home; and the others mourn the loss of a brother endeared to them by every holy affection. Is it strange that our hearts sink within us, when we feel that that sustaining presence is never more to be visibly with us in our hours of suffering and sorrow, and that his removal so suddenly, so unexpectedly, paralyzed us all?

You know all his later life. You know all his devotion to his family, to his parish, and to the claims of every human being with whom he came in contact. You know how entirely unselfish he was, how conscientiously he discharged every duty; and you know, alas! that the clear, steady light of his sunny presence, of his holy example, and of his unflinching Christian faith is withdrawn from us here except as a reflected blessing.

He died at his post in the full and conscientious discharge of his duty; and let us thank God that no motives of ambition, no temptation of larger parishes, fuller salaries, or more pretentious pulpits, ever made him for a moment hesitate to refuse them all. How he loved his parish and his people! I think I hardly ever received a

letter from him, in which he did not tell me of their kindness and devotion. I recollect, when I told him once that a member of the committee of a wealthy city parish said to me he would receive a call at once if he would speak only a word of encouragement that it would be accepted, he said, "I cannot speak that word; for, although it is one of the only two churches I should ever covet, I shall not leave my people while I feel I can do them good; and I never realize how dearly I love them, till a proposition like this is made to me."

I could say more; but it would still be only "Behold, how we loved him!"

Rev. John H. Morison, D.D., who, in fit terms, commemorated the life and services of the grandfather, speaks thus of the character of the grandson:

I inquired of his old friends, of schoolmates and relatives, who were with him through all his early years. Their testimony was all the same. He never did a wrong thing; he never seemed to have a wrong thought. The ugly feelings which even good boys sometimes give way to, never seemed to come to him. He was always sunny. No disturbing ambition ruffled the smooth current of his intercourse with his fellows; no jealousy or rivalry ever impaired the sweetness of his disposition. And yet he was not a fool, even in regard to the evil that is in the world. He knew it, as a pure spirit from another world might know it. However near he might come to those who cherished it, his instincts kept him from it, and never allowed it to soil the purity of his life or his mind. We cannot say of him, as Wordsworth does of Milton, that his "soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." No one could be more companionable than he was; but no star, in its loftiest seclusion, is less touched by what is gross or unclean.

It was a pleasant picture that we used to see in that

cheerful parsonage: the grandfather, slender, "erect as a sunbeam," his eye kindling with more than youthful enthusiasm as he discoursed on some great theme or some great wrong, his white locks reaching down with a saintly glory from his patriarchal head; the grandmother, paralytic, patient, affectionate, trusting, reverently looked to and watched over with a thoughtful tenderness, which it was touching to see. The mother had passed away; but her spirit seemed to linger still in the home and with the child of her love; while the offices of a mother were performed still with a mother's untiring watchfulness and affection. These were the daily and hourly influences under which the young child grew into consciousness and intelligence.

Behind the house, on the borders of the garden, was a river, varying in size and motion with all the changes of the year. Before the house was a steep hill; and, when he ascended that, he looked down into a beautiful valley, the silvery stream threading its way through it; and beyond, on all sides, were mountains, lifting up their everlasting heads.

These were the surroundings. Within them was the boy. But the life which grew up into proportions so harmonious, with such freedom in all its movements, so fresh, so full of activity, was marked by no unusual incidents. No particular anecdotes are told of it. He was very much like other boys, except that he seemed not to have their faults. He was affectionate and beloved; he was intelligent and painstaking. Yet he labored so spontaneously, with so free a spirit, that it did not seem as if he could be tired any more than the brook or the summer wind.

And this, perhaps, was one reason why he was allowed to wear himself out, without any one seeming to perceive it. His work appeared to us like play. He did it apparently so freely and so easily that his friends hardly recognized it as work. He did in this way many things which

would have worried the life out of another man; and yet no one thought that he could be tired. It was only his diversion and pastime. His household cares and parish duties seemed all of this character. They were entered upon with a gayety of heart which made us forget how deeply they must have gone into his soul, reaching down into his finer sympathies, laying their heavy exactions on his inward resources of thought and life. And so it happened, that he who had met the most solemn and laborious responsibilities as if they had been his holiday pleasures, had really been wearing himself out from within; and, when extra services were demanded and bodily disease came, there was no reserved strength to fall back upon, and he died. For this same reason, I think, we hardly did justice to our friend's intellectual powers and efforts.

His life was as pure as a blank sheet; and yet great things were written in it. If not visible to us now, we shall read them hereafter, where he sees them now to his surprise, in the Lamb's book of life.

Rev. Abiel Abbot Livermore, President of Meadville Theological School, pays the following tribute to the memory of his relative and friend:

I knew him as a golden-haired boy, with sunny face and blue eyes, always full of affection and vivacity. But, for the last fifteen years, I have not known much of him, except by occasional visits and letters, generally on some business matter. But, whenever I met him, he seemed to be a child still in all the most beautiful characteristics of childhood, while he had the wisdom and weight of a man. Few lives have been more harmonious than his; flowing on with scarcely a ripple from the fount to the sea, with no muddy torrents of evil, no hoarse cataracts of violence and passion, and no desolations of sin. A more successful life in all respects it would be hard to find. As boy and man, as son and parent, as husband and friend, as citizen and

Christian, as student and active worker, he touched life at all points, struck every chord, and brought music, not discord, from each. Now he is master of the heavenly harp. He could have done more for the world, had he lived, than the world could do for him. He had lived out the world's term-time, though but half the appointed length, and was ready to go into the first or senior class. There is something really thrilling and beautiful in thinking that in this dull and smoky earth such a sweet and charming life has been passed, so practical and useful, so immediate to all the needs of the time, and yet so remote, so transcendental and celestial, that it seems, now it is all for ever gone and lapsed into silence, to be more like a rare and happy dream than a piece of our hard human life. Happy we who saw the vision pass of so much goodness, and such a charming, attractive goodness too! Happier he who was and lived it all, and lives it still more perfectly than ever! We, too, must needs follow on to love and admire, and look up to the place where the heavens were cleft and received him in.

But I perceive how hard a task you have to make any such impression of the character of Mr. Smith upon others, as it made on us who knew and loved him. This fine aroma, once exhaled, is gone for ever. The very rotundity and completeness of each part of such a life is an obstacle to making it seen and felt by others. Then I think Mr. Smith had so many of the graces, that people did not recognize at first that he had the energies likewise, masculinity and femininity blended, the type of the perfect human being.

He, too, gave his young life for his country, a free-will offering. But perhaps, when he set out on that last mission South, it was in the divine programme that he should keep on, and visit his lately departed brethren on *the other side*, and give them the grand countersign of his own life, Duty.

I think the case of Mr. Smith is a vivid illustration of the fine possibilities of the Christian ministry in these latter days. Here was a man, who could not be called orator, poet, or philosopher; but his saintly goodness carries us farther into the Godhead than the best things done by orator, poet, or philosopher. They, in their highest flights of genius, describe the thing which he simply was, but could never describe. Of all the products which this earth yields from off her thousand fields, what gem of the mines, what flower from the vales, shines so bright, or smells so sweetly, as the consummate soul, moulded in the beauty, dyed in the tints, and fresh with the vitality of the divine and the immortal, whose "life was like one long, bright summer day, all the way to heaven"?

Excuse these broken words, and take them, not for what I have done, but for what I have not done, but would do, for the memory of my loved and ever-loved kinsman and younger brother. His mother was dear to me, and he dear for his mother's sake and his own. Now they are once more happy together.

What can be added to these words? A spirit so pure, unselfish, and heavenly-minded, a life so devoted to doing good, commands our highest reverence and admiration. It shows to us, as no words can do, the beauty of holiness and the blessedness of self-sacrifice. It is another illustration of the power of faith, of which it is the legitimate product. It is, moreover, encouraging to our nature to know that such excellence has been attained among us; and that one, with ordinary talents, laboring in an humble sphere, and living but half the allotted length of human existence, could yet be what he was, and accomplish the work which he performed. Such goodness can never die: its memorial is immortal.

SERMONS.

SERMONS.

I.

FIDELITY IN OUR SPHERE, HOWEVER HUMBLE.

Rom. xvi. 14: "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them."

THIS last chapter of Romans is, I know, to some not very interesting. They find little more of instruction in its verses than in the dry details of genealogy with which Matthew begins his Gospel. It might have been interesting to the church at Rome; but of what use to us is that long list of names, that catalogue of the brethren whom Paul held in affectionate remembrance? What do we know of Asyncritus and Phlegon and Hermas and Patrobas and Hermes, and the brethren which are with them? To me there is much which is both interesting and instructive in these slight allusions, these unknown names, which constitute the postscript of a letter so many centuries old. The man Paul seems to stand forth in them, with his generous human heart and his devoted friendships. No brotherly act,

no friendly service, no sacrifice for the great cause which he had so much at heart, had he forgotten. He sends them this affectionate salutation, as we in our letters wish to be remembered to our friends. He sends it as a token that he remembered them still, even amid all the difficulties and perplexities which harassed him there, in that distracted church at Corinth. In his letter, he had been discussing the highest questions of philosophy and religion; and yet he finds room for kind greetings to these individual friends. It does, indeed, shed a tender and an amiable light on his strong and manly character.

But this is not the point which is most interesting for us to contemplate. It comes nearer to us than that. Who were these Christian brethren, to whom Paul thus gratefully wished to be remembered? They were not among the great names of the Imperial City. History has taken no note of them, in her record of the illustrious men and women of that age. This simple salutation, and perhaps a crumbling slab in the damp catacombs where the Roman disciples buried their dead, are all the record of their memory which has survived. Their names may have been written in heaven, but they were seldom mentioned on earth. I suppose they were men and women like ourselves, moving about in their narrow circle, little known beyond it. What could they do, they would think perhaps, for the great world?

It was sunk in idolatry and in vice: what could they effect towards enlightening and reclaiming it? If they did have the truth, and if they practised virtue, the world knew nothing of it, and cared nothing for them. The busy crowds of the great city hurried by them, never asking who they were, or what they thought, or how they lived. Whatever others might do, they certainly could do nothing for their religion or for mankind. They had no great duties, except they might be called upon to wear the crown of martyrdom; and then it would be all forgotten, as the brutal shout of the multitude rose above the roar of the wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre.

What could such men do? And yet think what there was to be done! To these men, and a few others like them, was intrusted God's truth, the truth which leads to salvation. Through them, and, so far as human sight goes, through them alone, must the religion of Christ be preserved, and become triumphant. On the one side was heathenism, with numbers, wealth, power, intellect, inherited prejudices, ancient custom, every thing in its favor. On the other was a little company of humble, unknown men at Rome, another at Corinth, another at Ephesus, and a few more, here and there, in the great cities; not a distinguished person among them, not a man of influence; perhaps two or three Roman citizens, but mostly despised Jews, scattered then

as now over the world for purposes of traffic. What tremendous odds were against them! And yet, most remarkable of all, they triumphed, and that speedily. Not three hundred years passed, before the banner of the cross waved over the Roman armies; before paganism had lost its hold on the popular mind, and the perilous day had arrived when a Christian emperor sat on the throne of the Cæsars. Who, now, were the human instruments in accomplishing this stupendous revolution? These humble Christians at Rome and Colosse and Galatia, who never dreamed all the while that they were accomplishing any thing; they did it.

But how did they do it? They did it in the same way that you and I must do whatever work God has given to us. They did it unconsciously. They were blindly working at the foundation, and thought not of the stately temple which should hereafter be reared upon their labors. They had not a conception of the momentous results which would follow their efforts. They builded greater than they knew. Their separate acts did not seem to them very important. It was the small duties of life, for the most part, which weighed on their consciences. They gave themselves to these little duties and these separate acts with a true-hearted Christian purpose. They believed in Christ; they felt that he had given to their souls the one thing needful; and, believing and

feeling thus, they confessed him before men, trusting that he would, as he had promised, confess them before the Father in heaven. Neither fear of danger nor dread of reproach, neither natural diffidence nor morbid self-distrust, kept them back. It was their duty to give their influence, whatever it might be, for his holy cause. And so, openly and frankly, they acknowledged him as their Master; and they strove, not indeed to find great sacrifices which they might make and heroic deeds of service which they might do, but, better than that, to do whatever Christian duty required, whether it seemed great or small. They did not choose their work; but whatever devolved upon them, they performed faithfully. If their path led to sacrifices, they made them cheerfully; if to dangers, they shunned them not: but they went on calmly, trusting that God would not desert them. In short, they tried to be Christians; and though they might not understand how their humble obedience could hasten the coming of Christ's kingdom, yet they worked in faith, and left results to Him whom they served. They labored on, each in his own sphere, humble though it seemed; and, unknown to themselves, accomplished a great work, hardly inferior to that of Paul himself. Through such plain, uneventful, yet Christian lives, did Christianity triumph over all the might of paganism.

Now, my friends, we all are standing in the same position which these Roman believers held in the days of Paul. We do not think that we have any thing of importance to do, that any one is influenced by our example, that it matters much to the interests of the world how we live. Let great men, we say, do their duty scrupulously, and something may come of it; let men in prominent positions be virtuous, and their example amounts to something. But our work is of no importance. We are not known, except in a very narrow circle; and, even in this little sphere in which we are now moving, our memory will not live a score of years after us. Our humble obedience to Christ, our humble sacrifices for our fellow-men, can do nothing to hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. We cannot be so sure of that, my brethren. Acts are indeed ours; but the issue thereof is with God only. We know not but he may choose one of the humblest acts which we do to-day, as that on which the great future shall hinge. We are working in the dark. We are all unconscious what we are doing, for good or for evil. Here are immortal souls all about us, taking from us, perhaps, their direction. It is a fearful thought. What train of consequences have we set in motion to-day? God only knows.

Nor are we an exception. There have been very few men, who have done great things for the world,

that have been conscious what it was they were accomplishing. Did the Pilgrims think that their tempestuous voyage and dreary landing on this wild shore would be any thing for posterity? Did the signers of the Declaration of Independence dream what momentous results would follow that simple act? Did Luther comprehend what effects would follow from his translation of the Bible, there in the lonely castle of Wartburg? We have not those works to do, perhaps; but our service has some meaning in God's sight, and we know not how great, until the future interprets it. Be sure of this, that God never permits any act of obedience, however humble, or any sacrifice, however obscure, to fall to the ground. You cannot tell what good will come from the good, nor what evil will follow from the evil, which you do. Have you in the past week made a sacrifice for others? That may now, though unknown to you, be sustaining some tempted brother in his hour of heavy trial; and from that sacrifice may come to him strength and inspiration. Have you done to-day a difficult act, because Christ requires it? Trouble yourself not for the result. God will make it bear fruit. He gives the increase, though you may not see it. Do you not remember in the parable, when the Son of man separated those on the right hand from those on the left, and said to the former, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world," that they asked, "When saw we thee a hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink?" They did not remember when they did this. They were not conscious of having done any thing which others would recall. But the Lord remembered it, as an act done to him; and it made all the difference between "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed." The seed may look like a little grain of sand, when you commit it to the ground. But it is not sand; it shoots up, and brings forth of its kind. You know not how great a plant may spring from it; but you know that it must be of its kind, good from good, evil from evil. The greatness of the result is not your concern. You have only to see that it is of the right sort. And there is no security for us, in this fearful uncertainty, except always to do that which we know is right. Then, let the result be as it will, it shall be well. We need have no fears. The more God shall give of increase, the better it will be.

But there are some who have an honest shrinking from duties, in the fear that they may not perform them with entire faithfulness. And so far does this go, that they neglect altogether some particular duties rather than run the risk of imperfectly performing them. It may be an honest mistake, but how great a mistake! Suppose the sailor, in the time of peril, when ordered to his

post on the topmast, should refuse to go, for fear that he could not do his work in seaman-like shape? He need not fear: to do the best he can is all the captain wants. So is it with the Captain of our salvation: all he asks is, that we do the best we can. It is not Christian, to let our fears get the better of our duty. We must resolve on this, that every duty shall be done; hard or easy, whether the world laugh or applaud, it shall be done. Whether we can do it well or ill, leave that with Him who commands. He will accept the effort as a true service, and pardon what is deficient. This is the spirit, to be faithful in small things and in great alike. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

II.

WE ARE A SPECTACLE TO THE WORLD.

1 Cor. iv. 9: "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

PAUL'S thought here is, that he is standing in the arena, the great amphitheatre extending on every side about him, rising rank after rank of seats, with thousands of eager eyes centred upon him, watching every look, every motion, every act; and that audience not alone of flesh and blood, but even the angels from above looking down upon his labors and struggles. And who was it that claimed to stand in this august presence? An humble Jew, wandering from city to city, friendless, poor, persecuted, preaching to a few whom he could gather to hear him, what he felt were the words of life; and he a spectacle to the universe, both to men and to angels. A bold word, that! And yet is it not literally true? The smallest acts of that man, the most common words which his pen wrote or his brain dictated, are to-day treasured up for instruction and consolation by millions. Many centuries have passed since he wrought his work; the marble theatres, from which he drew

this illustration, have crumbled; and most of the proud cities in which he taught are as if they had never been: but this man's audience is still widening, and his work still going on. Fortunate he was to know and feel it then; for it was a thought full of inspiration and strength.

Would you think me presumptous, if I applied these words of Paul to Christian believers now, and said that it is true of us also, that we are a spectacle to men and to angels? We are entirely unconscious of being thus conspicuous. We feel as if our struggles and contests and trials, though very important to us, were nothing to any one else. And, when the day is over, we think it has passed and is forgotten; probably we ourselves have almost forgotten it. My friends, you cannot cut adrift so easily from what you have done and what you have been. The acts, the thoughts, the struggles, the sins, of this last week, have been open to other eyes than yours; and they are not gone, though you have forgotten them. "A spectacle to men and to angels!" Yes, and they will appear again to you one day. Whatever has merely to do with things material, however important it seems, must pass away; but the most trivial thing connected with the soul lasts, as the soul lasts, for ever. Its record is imperishable. I have seen recorded in the sandstone the mark of the little rain-drop, which fell, one day in the ages past, upon a sea-beach

of the primeval earth. We can know from it the very direction of the wind, in that transient shower of ten thousand centuries ago. When you deal with such a thing as a human soul, you are making impressions on something which is as plastic as the clay, and yet more enduring than the solid rock.

These records are not only enduring, but are often strangely brought out before the eyes of men. We have no choice what acts of ours shall be thus made manifest. We know not when we are standing on the stage, a spectacle: it may be to-day. It is enough to make us tremble, to think that at some time our weakness, our folly, our sin, may be all laid bare, so that the world can see them. Do you suppose, that when Judas went to the garden to consummate his purpose of betrayal, he felt that the world's eye was upon him? It was in the darkness of the night, and who would ever care to reveal the secret? And when, driven by remorse, he went and hanged himself, he thought, no doubt, that, in this world at least, both himself and his crime would soon be forgotten. How would he have felt, had he known that that night's base work was done in the presence of a world, and that his own name would go down to the latest generation as a by-word and a reproach?

As it is with the evil, so is it with the good. We know not but that one act of Christian sacrifice

may, in God's providence, be linked with consequences which shall make it a spectacle to the world. Do you suppose that the woman, when she did a little act of kindness for the Master, thought that her trifling deed would ever be remembered, except perhaps by Him to whom she paid this homage and respect? And yet, "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Who can tell that his slight sacrifices for the same Master may not be likewise honored? On one cold December day, a little company of ship-worn voyagers disembarked upon a bleak and uninhabited coast. Their thoughts were of thankfulness to God, that he had spared them, and led them safely to the end of their voyage. But God has made that day's landing historic: the very rock upon which they stepped from the unsteady boat is sacred. As De Tocqueville says, so finely, "Here is a stone which the feet of a few outcasts pressed for an instant, and the stone becomes famous; it is treasured by a great nation; its very dust is shared as a relic. And what has become of the gateways of a thousand palaces? Who cares for them?"

We know not upon what the embalming touch of time may fall. Perhaps before the name of Rome was great, an Etruscan artist, on the banks of the Tiber, designed a vase, and ornamented it

with figures emblematic of his poor faith in the gods of heathenism, and expressive of his questionings of the great mystery of death. That artist has been dead for twenty-five hundred years; but his work, dug from his own grave perchance, yet remains, one of the choicest art-relics of that distant age. A copy of it stands on our table, bearing our flowers, to-day. What would he have thought, could he have known that the work of his hands, twenty-five centuries after those hands had turned to dust, would stand in the temple of a faith not then given to men, but which answered all his blind longings, and in a country of whose existence he had never dreamed, three thousand miles across the unsailed ocean? Who knows but that some work or word of his may endure?

In our severe trials and struggles, also, we may have witnesses and sympathy when we think we are all alone. One of the most touching things that were found in the excavation of the buried city of Pompeii was the impression of two female figures, overtaken in their flight by the fiery storm, having with them their jewelry and one hundred pieces of money, and the iron keys of the home to which they hoped to return. Their very attitude, expressive of terror and mortal agony, is preserved. They suffered and died alone: no human eye could then look on to pity them. But now, after seventeen hundred years,

the hearts of men of another age turn to their sore distress in sympathy.

My friends, have you thought that some little trial of yours well borne, some trifling act, some chance word, may last yet longer? The plastic tables of immortal souls are all around you, and you are writing on them. Some Christian act of yours, nay, some Christian word even, may trace, as with the pen of steel and point of a diamond, its record, which shall be ineffaceable. Or it may be that your folly, your sin, may inscribe that other record as indelible, which, with the waters of many tears, you cannot wash out. It is a solemn thing to live, when we know that one short day of ours will have eternal consequences for us and for others.

Paul feels that he is standing in the arena, not merely with the men of his own time and those of after-ages gazing upon him: in yet more solemn presence does he stand. "A spectacle to men and to angels." Do those who have passed on, look back on these scenes which they have left? For one, I believe it with undoubting confidence. When you travel abroad among other scenes and men, though the fields be more fertile and the dwellings more splendid, do you cease to care for the home you have left, though it be an humble one? Nay, rather, do you not think the more of it, because it is so far away? And so, I believe, that the loves and memories of earth will cling to

us when we journey from it; that the earthly homes are remembered, even in the heavenly mansions; and that our friends, who have gone, are now looking back to see how it fares with us in struggle and in temptation, with an interest yet warmer than they used to feel, because now they know, what they knew not fully then, the momentous consequences which hang upon these fleeting hours. How have the acts of our past week appeared to those pure eyes, looking down from the heavenly home upon us here? Have we saddened them by our unworthiness and sin? If we care not for the men around us, surely it cannot be a light thing to any of us, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

Let me add one thought more. The time is coming when we shall be, not alone a spectacle to men and to angels, but to ourselves. What if we can never forget? It is a relief to us, when, after the sharp sting of conscience has been blunted by time, we can forget our misdeeds. What if they are not forgotten, but only laid away in the deeper chambers of the memory, waiting the day of reckoning? We speak of the record kept in heaven of every act of every soul, which is unalterable, ineffaceable. The duplicate record is kept on earth, we ourselves being the swift witnesses. A friend, not long ago, told me of a remarkable experience; and, indeed, I have heard

of similar ones from many others. He was suddenly precipitated from a height of many feet; and, in that brief interval of a second or two while he was falling, the events and actions of almost his whole life, thoughts of his family, sorrow for neglects of professional duty, all thronged through his mind. That experience, he said, explained to him what the day of judgment might be; a day when all these secret records of a lifetime should be unveiled.

It is a fearful thought, that we shall thus stand, with all the forgotten acts and thoughts and purposes of a lifetime brought before us again! How thankful we shall be, if we shall find in those records sins blotted out by repentance, misdeeds balanced by Christian efforts! How bright will seem to us the account of sacrifices in behalf of the right, of kind offices to the needy, of all words of Christian charity and love! As, from hour to hour, we write that record, let us remember, that, one day, we ourselves must read it.

III.

MAGNIFY YOUR OFFICE.

Rom. xi. 13: "I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE."

WHAT is an office? It comprehends two ideas. In the first place, the idea of duty: an office is a place of service for others. This is its original signification: "all service or attention which a man renders to others, whether from duty or kindness." It is, then, in its very origin, a term of disinterestedness and benevolence. An office is not a place where a man is to seek good for himself or to work for himself, but where he is to do good to others and work for others. In the political use of the word, however far the theory may vary from the practice, it has this same original meaning: a place, not for this or that man's convenience and profit, but where the public good may be promoted, and the public wants answered. Even He who held, under God's providence, the greatest office since the world began, thus speaks of himself: "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The first idea of the word, then, is one of service; and this not for one's self, but for others.

But, in addition to this, the idea of appointment is included in it. How did it happen that we are in any such place of service? We did not place ourselves under this obligation. We did not of our own accord take something upon us, which otherwise would have had no claim on our efforts. Duty is not grounded upon any consent or acknowledgment of ours. Our duties are not accidental; they are imposed upon us. We are appointed to them: God is the Appointer. Paul recognizes this in our text. He was the Apostle to the Gentiles. The great work of preaching Christ's gospel to the nations was intrusted to him. There were other apostles; but he could not say, that he would leave this to Peter or to Matthew: it was his office. Neither could he excuse himself by thinking that the work was God's, and that, even if he individually should be faithless, God would still see that it was done. The work, with all its solemn weight, was laid upon him; and how was he straitened till it was accomplished! It was no self-imposed obligation, no self-sought office; for he was an apostle, not by the will of men, nor by man, but by the will of God. In this spirit he performed the duties of his office, as being God's appointment to him. What earnestness it required; what strong endeavor; what self-sacrifice! Had not God appointed him to it, and how could he be negligent? If it had been of his own choosing,

he would not have felt so keenly the responsibility; but it was a sacred trust.

My brethren, we are all in office, in this Christian sense. We have not the same duty which Paul had, nor was the notice of our appointment conveyed to us in the same miraculous way; but still we are in office, "not by the will of men, nor by man, but by the will of God." For each of us there is a special service to perform: to that he is appointed, and for that he is responsible. How appointed? you may ask. Your tastes, your peculiar gifts, the circumstances of life which have been your educators, the events which have led you in a particular direction, every thing which constitutes your fitness for a work, is your commission for it, the evidence to you of your divine appointment. And the very fact that you have been led, in God's providence, to a special sphere of action, is a strong presumption that you are fitted for it, that this is the sphere in which you are commissioned to minister.

There are two opposite faults in this matter. One is office-seeking. There are many people who give more attention to widening their sphere than to filling it. It is imagined that one's gifts indicate a higher place than is at present occupied, and that that is wasted on small duties and insignificant results which is equal to greater things. There is a constant discontent with actual duties, and a reaching out for fictitious ones.

But this is not the right spirit. Suppose that the fancied ability is actually possessed by a man; this feeling will prevent the accomplishment of its own end. Higher places do not come for the seeking. They are rather to be accepted than to be striven for. Do the present work well to the best of your ability, and the way will open before you, and you will be led into it. Wait for the Master of the feast to say, "Go up higher."

The opposite fault is the shrinking from duties. The divine call to work is very slowly recognized: many things which ought to come within the sphere of service are excluded from it. And the reason very probably is an excessive modesty, a distrust of our own ability. We do not undertake it, because we feel not fully competent to carry it through successfully. Now, we have no means of judging of our ability to do any thing, except by trying. And the criterion by which we should judge whether it is an office to which the Lord has appointed us, is, not this uncertain opinion of our talent, but the need of the work's being done. See that there is need, and let that be your call; accept that as a divine appointment. Let it be what it may, act thus; and, if you are mistaken, you will know it soon enough. Do not despise the office, even if it be a class in the Sabbath school which stands vacant from Sunday to Sunday. Neglect it not: it is the Lord's appointment, waiting for some one. It

is yours; accept it: and you know not what blessed fruits you may gather from this part of the Lord's vineyard, what results for time and eternity may follow your faithful discharge of this office.

But when we are in our place, when we have accepted and begun to perform its duties, with what spirit should we regard it? Paul's example here is worthy of all imitation. "I magnify mine office." You notice that it was not himself that he magnified. Many people look on the performance of this or that duty, only as a means of self-exaltation. Self is at the bottom even of their service of God. It was not so with Paul. It was the office that he magnified, the duty God had given to him to do. He felt its importance, its dignity. The fruits it bore to him were oftentimes reproaches, and sometimes scourgings. Men despised the humble tent-maker, as with feeble voice he told his message. The message itself was foolishness to them. An apostleship then was not what it is now; but, to Paul, it was the grandest, the sublimest work which had been in that age intrusted to man to do. To be a king he would esteem a small thing; to be a philosopher, likewise. But to be an apostle of Christ, though that Christ was scorned and derided, was the loftiest station a man could hold; an office which called for the most devout thankfulness in him who had been

so honored as to receive it, which deserved the most conscientious faithfulness in him who performed it. In short, he magnified his office; he recognized what it was. Beneath its outward seeming of reproach and contempt, he saw the grandeur of the divine commission of being a king and priest unto God.

Now, we have not apostleships; but we all are commissioned to some office, and our appointment is not accidental or of human choice. Wherever the place may be, and whatever the office which each is called to fill of service to the community and his God, we should have the spirit of Paul and magnify that office, however humble men think it to be. If they undervalue it, do not you call it poor and mean! Let it be a noble office to you, by the spirit with which you enter upon it. Its appointment is from the same Governor, and its account is to the same Judge, as any other which the world may call higher. Let it be your highest aim to fill it perfectly, and be satisfied with nothing less. If God has set you to be a merchant, let your course be the model of an upright, broad-minded, liberal, Christian merchant. If God has appointed you to serve him and your fellows by tilling the ground, be a model farmer. If he has led you to some mechanical trade, give to it your best powers of mind and body. If he has called you even to the place of a servant, discharge each of its duties to the

best of your ability. "Who sweeps a room as to God's praise, makes that and the action fine." Above all, honor and magnify your calling, what ever it be. Never allow a thought that it does not demand a man's highest powers, and that it is not worthy of them. "Magnify your office." Without this, a man can do nothing anywhere. He must think it just as honorable and just as noble as any other in the wide world, and then seek to add new honor to it by his own faithful performance of its duties.

Many of you have lately witnessed a noble example of this. He has magnified his office, who has learned for himself, and has expounded to us, a new application of the Christian law of kindness, extending it even to the animal. He has done a Christian work, not more important in procuring mercy for the horse, than in elevating human character. A lady spoke to me, recently, of a nurse, somewhat in these terms: "She magnifies her calling. When she comes into a sick-room, she seems to walk as proudly as a queen in her little kingdom. She is never so happy as she is there, doing with scrupulous fidelity all its little duties; and these are as important to her as the great cares which weigh on the ruler of a nation." Why should she not be proud of her calling? Remember, that, at this moment, a Crimean nurse wears the most honored woman's name in Christendom.

Now, this is the spirit which I mean: the spirit of honest pride, of scrupulous fidelity, which we ought to cultivate in our various callings. We can each magnify our office; and, to whatever place of duty and service to others God has been pleased to appoint us, we can fill it well. There are, indeed, diversities of gifts and diversities of works; but all are appointed by the same Lord, and all contribute to the same end. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

IV.

TEMPTATION.

Matt. vi. 13: "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

DOES it not seem strange that this petition should be worded just as it is? We pray to God not to lead us where we shall be likely to disobey him: would the kind Father lead us thither? We look to him as the strengthener against temptation, rather than as its author.

What is temptation? It is commonly used in a bad sense, to signify an allurement to sin. In this popular sense, the Apostle James uses it, who was one of the disciples to whom Christ first gave this prayer, when he says, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God tempteth no man." This is most certainly true, in the signification, which the word sometimes bears, of an allurement to evil. God surely never does thus entice his children to sin. But still it is also true, that God does lead us into temptation.

The common definition of the word gives only half its meaning. The primary meaning of it, both in our own language and in the original, is different. To tempt means to try, to prove.

Temptation is that outward occasion which tests the character, and brings out what is within us. There is nothing in this which is in itself bad; but the fact that a bad meaning has become attached to it, is a lamentable proof of human weakness and infirmity. It shows us that the drawing forth what is within us usually results in revealing evil, that the testing of character commonly betrays its corruption. It is wonderful how man's weakness and sinfulness thus stamp themselves upon his very language. It is in this primary sense of the word, that God may be said to tempt us. He does bring us into circumstances which try and prove us. Why should we be unwilling to admit this? Is it not the very purpose of our present existence, to be a state of probation and discipline? We cannot call temptation, in this sense, necessarily an evil, unless we rebel at the whole order of the world, as it came from the hand of God. It is true, temptation is often the occasion of sin; but, we must remember, not necessarily so. The occasion was not placed before us to make us sin, but to make us strong by resisting sin. Virtue is its child, as well as wickedness. The former is God's intention: the latter is man's perversion.

What we call temptation, then, is merely a circumstance, neither good nor bad in itself, but giving an opportunity for a person to show himself to be either. It is not a blessing or a curse; but

it gives to an individual the fearful power of choosing one or the other. The evil of it, and its only evil, — its tendency to allure to sin, — rests, not in it, but in ourselves. Temptation, in its bad sense, is not outside of us, but always within us. God does not tempt us: we tempt ourselves. It is not merely true philosophy, but also the plain teaching of common sense, when the Apostle James says, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." This double character of temptation comes from the very nature of virtue, which is not an escape from evil, but an act of choice for the good in spite of the evil. Temptation implies the possibility of sin; for the power of choice includes in it the possibility of choosing wrongly.

If temptation is God's discipline, is it right to pray that we may escape from it? It seems to me that the petition is rather the asking that we may not be tempted beyond our strength; or that God, in the words of Paul, "will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." We come to trial, distrusting our strength. We have yielded too often before, to have much confidence in ourselves. We almost shrink from the testing, lest it should prove our weakness; and hence we lift up the trembling cry, "Suffer us to come into no trial which we may not resist." In this spirit we should go to meet all the temptations of life.

We should be humble, even where we feel confident. Presumption here is certain ruin. The strongest cannot confide in his strength, sure that it will not betray him in the evil hour.

The spirit which prays that it may not be led into temptation, surely ought not to go into it of itself. It is rash for the best man to trust his virtue needlessly in scenes and circumstances of temptation. Who of us is so strong but that he may fall? If in any soul comes the whisper that it need have no fears for itself, it is, by that sign, in extreme peril. It is said, that, in the prospect of battle, the raw recruits are apt to jest of bloodshed and death, while the veteran soldier never does. So those who have had little exrience of life are apt to be foolhardy in their approaches to sin, nay, dare it to ensnare them; but the veteran Christian, though he may have come unscathed out of many conflicts, knows their full risk, their extreme danger, and will not expose himself needlessly. We may lay it down as a rule, that he who ventures rashly into temptation, trusting in his own strength for security, will be very likely to fall. Such a course does not show brave confidence in one's self, but foolhardy presumption.

And yet how many we see who play around the flame, thinking that they shall not be burned; who trifle on the edge of the precipice, sure that they shall not fall! Have you not seen those

whom you and everybody knew to be just on the verge of ruin from a master passion, remaining in careless security, saying, that the weak, who cannot resist, should be on their guard; but that they are strong enough to control their appetites. Let the strongest beware how he trifles with temptation. If you would know its power, look over the brink of the precipice on which you are walking so carelessly, and see what is in the gulf beneath! The sight will chill your blood with horror. Wrecks of genius which once delighted the world are there; ruins of souls rich in wisdom, in power, in renown, are there, because they tampered with temptation. They thought, as you now think, that they were strong; and they fell, as you may fall. The ground where you stand is slippery; the tracks upon it all lead in one direction, and none lead back. Your only safety is, by your strong will, if it be not already gone, and Heaven's help, to retreat. Watch and pray, my brother, that you enter not into temptation.

By how many of these occasions are we surrounded! God's richest gifts, his best blessings, may be tempters. Every lot is encompassed with its own snares, differing in appearance. One, by the very abundance of wealth which God has given, is tempted to worldliness, and to forgetfulness of the Giver. Another, weighed down by poverty, is led into sinful murmuring. Joy leads some to unthankfulness; sorrow, others to

despair. Sickness fills the soul with complaining; health withers it with presumptuous trust in its own strength. Even one's very virtues are a temptation to spiritual pride. And it is a remarkable fact, that every one thinks his own experience to be the hardest which ever fell to the lot of man. If he were only tried as his neighbor is, he could easily be victorious; but he is attacked in what is his weakest point. The drunkard, who has a good temper, envies the temptation of him who sins by indulging his anger. He could bear that provocation, and it would not lead him into sin: why, then, was it not allotted to him? The passionate man, perhaps, finds no strong allurement to evil in that appetite which leads his brother to ruin. Each might be, nay is, victorious where the other is overcome. An enemy does not bring his assault on the strongest side of a fortification, but where the battlements are lowest, and the trenches shallowest. If there be a flaw in any part of the machinery of an engine, the whole pressure comes upon that, and it breaks there. So temptation attacks us in our vulnerable part. If there be a single spot, which, Achilles-like, the heavenly defence does not cover, that spot the fatal arrow finds. Few there are who are defended at every point; and, when a sudden emergency betrays this in those who had hitherto stood strong, the world is apt to judge them too harshly.

Each of us has his weak point; and there, sooner or later, must the battle be fought. That is no temptation which it is perfectly easy for us to resist. Neither ought we to be flattered into presumptuous pride, nor to plume ourselves on our strength, because we have resisted where others have fallen. What is easy for us may be the very plucking-out of a right eye to another. The meek man need not boast of his meekness, when he sees his brother yield to passion. The lavish man need not be proud of his liberality, when he sees the meanness of his neighbor. Each has his own weakness, different, it may be, from the other; each, his darling sin; let him look to that. I have my great temptation in my study and my pulpit, and there I must meet it. You have yours in your counting-rooms and warehouses, in your shops and on your farms, and in the cares and duties and vexations of domestic life. It is no merit, and it implies no strength in you, that you do not yield to the pressing temptations of my life; and it is no merit in me, that I do not yield to the temptations of the counting-room, the workshop, the farm.

But, however varied in form, these all are alike in substance. We all, rich and poor, cultivated and ignorant, good and bad, are brothers in this, that we are tempted. May we be brothers also in the manly and Christian resistance to our besetting sins! This is what we ask, and not for

ourselves alone, "Lead us not into temptation." The poor woman who is tempted by pain and poverty, in praying for herself, prays also for you, who, though knowing not sickness or pinching want, yet are tempted in your mansion, as she is in her hovel. We are brothers in temptation; we are brothers in intercession for help. But, though it be "common to man," we need not yield; God gives us that wherewith we may quench every fiery dart of the wicked.

Temptation must come to all, and it must come to you. It is strong; therefore be not presumptuous. It is not invincible; therefore be of good courage. You are not alone: every child of earth is fighting the same battle. The great Captain of our salvation was tempted in all points, as you are, and yet was without sin. Many have overcome; be therefore active. Many have fallen; "wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

V.

CONFLICT, GOD'S METHOD OF PROGRESS.

Job i. 6, 12: "NOW THERE WAS A DAY WHEN THE SONS OF GOD CAME TO PRESENT THEMSELVES BEFORE THE LORD, AND SATAN CAME ALSO AMONG THEM."—"AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SATAN, BEHOLD, ALL THAT HE [THE MAN] HATH IS IN THY POWER; ONLY UPON HIMSELF PUT NOT FORTH THINE HAND. SO SATAN WENT FORTH FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD."

GOD does not hold a divided sovereignty. He is absolutely supreme. Whatever is he allows, and allows for some good purpose of his own. There are things which we call evil; but they are God's instruments, working out in their way his ends. The very personification of evil is said to have come in among the angels of God, and, willingly or unwillingly, to have answered his purposes.

Perhaps, if we look around from any single point of view, all seems dim and confused. You might think that Satan was doing his own work, not the Lord's; but survey the whole, and you can plainly see that God is ruling all. To one looking over a battle-field, where armed hosts are contending, every thing appears like confusion; he can discern little method amid the clash of arms and through the sulphurous smoke.

Even those who are themselves engaged do not know the purpose of this or that manœuvre; they may think, where they stand, that all is lost. But one mind is over all, and retreat here is a part of the same plan as advance there. Victory comes in the end; and only from the end can you understand the object of each movement, and unravel the intricacies of the plan. And so we are often deceived, when we attempt to trace out results in the world about us. There is conflict everywhere; but we may be sure of this, that the great conflicts of the universe and of life have no doubtful issue. God is above them all; and he always gains the victory, and has his purpose answered.

I. The material universe has been a scene of convulsion and conflict. As we walk in our beautiful fields, we are treading upon the ruins of buried creations. Devastation and destruction have been busy here. This little planet of ours has been ravaged by fire and flood through untold cycles of ages. But was it accident? Was it a victory of the powers of evil? Ages ago, the surface of the earth was covered with large pines and gigantic ferns and mosses, high as our forest-trees. They lasted their time, and then all that luxuriant growth was swept away in seeming ruin. Was it all in vain, and did the destruction of all this rich creation come too soon? Nay, it had answered its purpose; and

God was, in that seeming ruin, storing up in the boundless coal-beds all those primeval forests for the use of man, when he should inhabit the earth. And then another form of existence took its place. Fishes, reptiles, animals, each higher than the other, had their day, as the earth was prepared for them; till, last of all, the Creator placed man in the world, which he had been fitting up so magnificently for his abode. We do not live, then, on a wrecked and ruined earth, but in a garden of paradise, which the Lord has been making ready for his children through countless ages. A few more such devastations, and the world would be purified and fit for angels' habitation. These convulsions, which seem so dreadful as we read their record in the stone, were the ravages, not of destruction, but of birth. God directed them, and through them was his design accomplished.

II. There are conflicts, too, in the world of men, upheavings and volcanic convulsions in human society. History is a constant record of strife and war. As we read its pages, we are almost tempted to think that this world is under the dominion of the adversary; and that Satan, when he promised all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them to our Saviour if he would fall down and worship him, was offering of his own. Poor Satan! He knew not, that, all the time, he was only an instrument in the hands of

the Almighty. To the actors in these conflicts they may have seemed only evil, in themselves and in their results. And yet they have all hastened the coming of God's kingdom. Through all these convulsions of society has humanity been advancing with steady step. How must the wars of the cross have appeared to an intelligent man of that time, as he saw all Europe, seized as it were with madness, hurling itself against the gates of the Holy Land! What but evil and ruin could result from such strife? And yet the Crusades were to Europe the birthroes of a higher life, intellectually, politically, and spiritually. They were the prelude to the increased power of the people, to the revival of learning, and to the reformation of the Church. Satan had been most actively and busily doing God's work. These conflicts were God's instruments, not for destruction, but for purification.

So there may be those who see in our present commotion and conflict* evil and only evil continually. It is sad, it is terrible. We cannot well exaggerate its evil and its woe, as we look from so near a position upon the blood it sheds and the ruin it entails. I believe, however, that God has brought us into it; that he will permit it to last till his work is done upon the nation's heart; and that then he will bring our country out of it, redeemed, regenerated, purified, yet so

* Written in 1863.

as by fire, making the very wrath of man to praise him. The Lord's ends will surely be answered; and, sooner or later, the right and divinely ordained issue will be developed out of this seeming confusion and chaos. God broods over the face of the deep. But, if his pre-ordained purpose is inevitably accomplished, what matters it what we do, or which side we take? It will not hinder God's triumph, if we neglect our duty. If we are faithless, he can find other instruments. He can do without us; but we cannot do without him. It may make no difference to his plan how you act; but it makes an infinite, an eternal difference to your own souls, whether you are on the side of God or of the adversary.

III. As in the material universe and in society, so in the Church, there have been dissensions and strife. It seems sad that the disciples of a common Master should be so divided and discordant; that Christians of different names should love each other so little, and make of more account their petty differences than the one worthy name by which they are called. And I suppose Satan considers it his masterpiece of strategy, that Christians are so busily engaged in fighting with each other rather than with him. It is sad, this sectarian animosity; and yet God is here over-ruling the seeming evil for good. In these very conflicts of sects, the truth as it is in Jesus

is brought out into clearer light. Each sect brings its contribution to the divided body of Christ. The stagnation of uniformity and indifference is thus prevented, and the way is prepared for a true and intelligent unity of the Church; a unity better and more comprehensive than any of which Pope or Inquisition has ever dreamed. Thus these very divisions and controversies, which are in one aspect so deplorable, are serving the cause of Christ.

IV. There is conflict, too, within every human soul and in every human experience. One of the writers of the Epistles speaks of the lusts which war in the members. Who has not felt something of this? And yet whence comes this "war in the members"? We mistake, I think, when we speak of bad passions: we have not bad passions. Every seed which God has planted within us is good, if we do not allow it to grow too rank. A propensity is bad, not in its natural use, but in its abuse. When we are contending with our passions, we must not think that we are dealing with outlaws from the divine economy, but with what might be made God's own instruments. We have to control and use, not to extirpate them. A passion subjected, becomes, when transformed, an increased power. Thus is one great object of life answered. Here is the divinely appointed field, in which we are to develop our wills, and strengthen our energies, and

consecrate our powers to God. It is not Satan's field: it is the Lord's.

And so it is with the experiences of human life. Would we strike from these our trials, sorrows, conflicts, even our temptations? We might wish to do so, while we were in the midst of the doubtful conflict; but, when the victory has been gained, never. We know that from them has come much that is best and highest in us. We cannot spare them. We see in them, even more than in what we call our best blessings, God's merciful hand.

There are conflicts, then, in the material universe, in society, in the church, and in individual life; but God is above all. They are his agencies, not Satan's: and his agencies are designed for good. But the better a tool is, the more harmful it becomes when turned from its proper purpose. The world was not intended to be a battle-field, but a school; and its conflicts are lessons of God's teaching. Do we not all, however, have a longing for the blissful time when wars and conflicts shall cease; when fightings without and contentions within shall disturb no more? Is there nowhere any rest? There may not be in this world; for to gain strength by conquest, and to grow by bearing, by resisting, by striving, seems to be one of the elementary lessons of our life on earth. We may learn that lesson here; and, when we rise into the upper school, it may not need to be re-

peated. There the great Teacher may set for his children higher tasks in their never-ending education. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest." We may never cease to think, to work, and to serve; but heaven, we may trust, will free us from the difficult and doubtful conflicts of earth, and give us holy peace.

VI.

ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.

2 Tim. ii. 3: "Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

NEVER before was there honesty and frankness equal to that of Christ and his apostles, when they called upon men to accept the gospel, and enter on the Christian life. There is in their discourses no concealment of dangers, no smoothing over of difficulties. They do not represent it as an easy thing to be a Christian: on the contrary, they seem studiously to dwell upon the perils, the sacrifices, the self-denials, which encompass that path in which they urge men to walk. They speak often, it is true, of the joys, the blessedness, the glory, of him who becomes a disciple; but it is joy in tribulation, blessedness in persecution, glory in trial. They open the gate, and point the way; but it is a strait and narrow road, and the cross stands at the end of it. Some might grow weary under the heat and burden of the day; but no one could say that he had been deceived.

What the Master did not do at the beginning, we have no right to do now. We must represent the Christian life just as it is, when we invite men to enter upon it, the same as Jesus and his apostles exhibited it; no less comprehensive in its demands, no less difficult, no more inviting. We are allowed to make no deductions for the timid, the slothful, the pleasure-seeking. It is no path into which the indolent and self-indulgent can enter, and be indolent and self-indulgent still. Jesus told those of his own time plainly what was required of his disciples. He himself went before them on that hard and painful road; and we have no right to improve his terms.

To be a Christian to-day is not an easy work, a result to which one can be borne lightly along on the breath of a whispered wish. It is not to be accomplished by a single effort, though it be sincere and strong. Be not deceived. He who enters upon a Christian course is engaging in a toilsome, a life-long, a self-denying work. It is just as it was in the early times. We may not have the same trials of our faith, the same perils to encounter, the same sacrifices to make. We must have the spirit which would enable us to make these, if need should come; which does enable us to bear ourselves in our circumstances meekly, devoutly, unselfishly, as the early disciples did in theirs. Christ requires of us no less than he did of them: the unconditional enlist-

ment in his service, the unreserved surrender, the whole-hearted consecration of ourselves, which makes all things possible. We, too, must place duty before every thing, and follow unquestioningly wherever he leads. Be it a darling passion to be crucified, be it a hard work to be done, be it a sacrifice to be offered, be it a cross to be taken up, we must follow him to the end.

Do we wonder why God has made the way of life, in which he would have us all to go, so difficult? We wish sometimes that this was the broad and easy road, so that we could not help entering it; and that it was the strait and narrow path which led to destruction, so that we might easily shun it. But the Father will not hire his children to love and obey him. He will not buy them off even from the downward road. Duty is not duty which is bought. Such love and such obedience are worthless in his sight. He would not appeal to what is lowest in us, our love of ease and pleasure: but, in the name of what is noblest and highest, he calls us to his service; and the service which is not a response to that call is of no worth to him.

Neither do we ourselves value highly that which costs us little. We never appreciate a blessing which comes to us with no effort on our part. We must earn a thing in order to fully understand its value. What do we think of the worth of free worship and the open Bible? Let one

from priest-ridden and king-ridden Spain risk his life, and come hither into exile, and he would thank God for them in every prayer. How little we value our views of Christian faith! Some time ago, I was talking with a clergyman, who ten years before, after careful and prayerful investigation, had been compelled to give up his Calvinistic views, and had become a Unitarian. His change cost him, of course, much sacrifice. He was obliged to leave the denomination of which he had been a prominent minister. He gave up his parish; old friends looked coldly on him; and the associations of many years were broken up. He was now in the decline of life; and, poor though he was for the truth's sake, he found himself adrift on the world. When I saw him, it was ten years since his change of views; and few had extended to him the hand of greeting; and he had only found opportunity to preach at rare intervals. He felt, he said, that, if God should spare him, he had ten years more, in which, in some little corner, he might still do some service for his Master. He spoke of his discouragements, of sickness in his family, of poverty, of the estrangement of friends, of his little apparent success in the new field. "But," said he, and his eyes glistened as he said it, "I would not exchange the joy of my liberal views of God for the best pulpit in Christendom." And so it is with our Christian faith itself. We value it very much in

proportion to what it costs us. If it costs nothing, we prize it little; but, with every added cost, its value rises, till, when it asks for the supreme sacrifice, it stands inestimable. In prosperity, we receive it with cold indifference and thoughtlessness; but add reproach and suffering and death to its price, and its worth increases, till the solid earth is but a poor bauble by its side.

God has so arranged the work of life that it may minister to our development and growth, and build us up in all that is noble and good. This is the design of our existence on earth. It is not for enjoyment, but for discipline; and shall not the Christian life conform also to the divine purpose? God has made that to be hard and difficult, because it is good for us to do hard things, to work and struggle. Thus only can that which is best in us be developed; thus do we grow strong; and this is the reason why it is not easy for us to be Christians. It would not be so well for us, if God had thus opened wide the gate and smoothed the path. No doubt he could have planted in each of us all the gifts and graces of the Christian character full-grown; but he saw that it was best for us that we should by struggle win them. In these days, we have not too many sacrifices to make for our faith, rather too few for us to feel how precious it is, and to make us robust and strong. We should love Jesus more, I think, if we had more to do and to suffer for him.

There is a disposition at the present day, in every thing, to smooth over difficulty, to find out short and easy ways, to cheapen the price of every good; but I believe, if we make our Christian faith to cost little, we shall find that we have a faith worth even less than we pay. I would apply this even to the forms and accessories of religion. We gain nothing by abating the strictness of the conditions which fence in the Church of Christ. We lose in strength of character, in energy of Christian purpose, if they are abated for us. It used to be a hard thing, in the days of our fathers, to conform to the conditions of admission to the Church. One who was diffident and distrustful would naturally shrink from the "propounding" before the congregation, and from the other forms observed in the public confession of Christ. I remember, in my own experience, that it was something of a cross to take up. But then this thought must occur to one seriously pondering upon his duty, as he wishes for some easier way: "Here I am enlisting in the service of a Master who requires the giving up of one's self entirely to him, the surrender of all one has and is, of life itself, if need be, even the taking up the literal cross and following him; and here I am shrinking from the trivial sacrifice at the beginning! What is my faith worth, if it cannot bear this little test?" If forms are inappropriate or unmeaning, let them be

given up; but not because they are difficult, not because there will be one less sacrifice for him who would be a Christian: that is contrary to the whole genius of Christianity. Let it be hard; you ought to do hard things; it will do you good to do them. The object is not to bring persons into the Church at any event and in any way. Christ requires this public confession of our faith in him quite as much for our sake as for his. He would mark by a definite and decisive act the choice of his service; he would add to our own souls the strength which comes from doing a difficult act in obedience to him, who has a right to demand it. If the public avowal of our faith is a sacrifice, on that very account he requires it as a fitting entrance upon that course, which, with all its joys, demands that we be earnest and self-denying.

Do you look upon it, then, as strange that you find in your Christian path, perhaps at its very beginning, difficulties to be overcome, sacrifices to be made, hard things to be done? You must expect them. If you are not willing to take up your cross, whatever it may be, you are not ready to be Christ's disciple. He has foretold it all to us. His own path was not strewn with flowers. The disciple is not greater than his master; it is enough for him that he be as his master. Christ can ask no less of us. He does not want vacillating and lukewarm disciples, half with him and

half against him. He asks for those who will come to him, giving up all besides; no holiday warriors, but those who will "endure hardness," if need be, "as good soldiers of Jesus Christ;" who are not afraid to own his name; who will try to be true to their confession, in spite of irreligion without and foes within. The conditions are clear: let them not be smoothed over nor disguised.

Are you ready to enlist in such a Master's service? His work needs helpers; the fields are white already for the harvest,—yes, withering for the lack of reapers! Shall we put our hand to the work? It may be that he can do without us; that his work may find other helpers, and his harvest be gathered by other hands; but can we do without him? Our souls need his service more than his service can possibly need us. There we find, in our sacrifice, joy; in our hardest toil, best growth; in what we give up, our exceeding great reward. It costs much, but it gives infinitely more. "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or parents or brethren or wife or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and, in the world to come, life everlasting."

VII.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

John xviii. 38: "PILATE SAITH UNTO HIM, WHAT IS TRUTH?"

IT was a strange scene on that day in the judgment-hall at Jerusalem. The Roman governor, cowardly, vacillating, worldly, dissolute, sceptical about that which is the highest need of the human soul, and yet superstitious, examining for his life the Son of God, the Saviour of the world! Pilate and Jesus: what had these two in common? And yet they were together on that day, asking, answering, the judge and the accused! What could Pilate, lost in worldliness, hardly conscious of any higher wants than those of this life, understand of the motives, the mission, the kingdom, of Jesus? "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth," said the Saviour. The truth! Pilate understood nothing about that. What is it worth? how much will it bring? what is its price? Its price to Jesus had been poverty, suffering, persecution; and the multitude were then crying for the blood of him who had borne witness to it. To Pilate's mind,

it was not worth its price. It was sacrificing the solid realities of this world to a dream or a phantom. It was folly; and he was only a blind enthusiast who stood at his bar. "What is truth?" was his mocking question. Truth is an empty name, he meant to say.

Do we not hear this language of Pilate repeated in our own day? Is it not the same statement, in substance, with one which we often hear, "It makes no difference what a man believes"? What is this but saying, in milder words, that truth is an empty name? If it really does make no difference to any one what he believes, it speaks very little for that man's intellectual honesty, or for his mental or even moral health. Such a one would be an Episcopalian in England, a Papist in Rome, an Infidel in Paris, a Brahmin in Calcutta, and a Mahometan in Constantinople, and yet be the same person wherever he was, only dressed differently. Such a one might say truly, "It makes no difference what I believe." He might just as well call himself by one name as another, because really he believes nothing.

But there are others who say the same, who have come to this conclusion by a different course of reasoning. They think that opinions and beliefs are indefinite, vague, unpractical, and too unsubstantial to exert much influence upon human life. They say, Let those whose business it

is to consider such matters, attend to them: we must be occupied with what is of higher practical importance. It is with this feeling that they declare that it makes no difference what they believe; and, in thus speaking, they unconsciously do themselves great injustice. It is not true, that it makes no difference with them. In the outward relations of life, our beliefs not only make a difference with us, but in great measure they determine our course. You believe that certain methods of managing business will lead to prosperity, and you adopt those methods; you believe that a certain venture will be successful, and you act on the belief. In a still higher sphere, you believe that certain things are wrong, and I trust that you act on this belief. What reason is there for stopping here, and saying that the highest beliefs have no effect on the conduct? What you believe about God, about Christ, and about man, touching as it necessarily does the deepest springs of life, and thence extending to every province of human action, must influence you.

The brain, it is true, is located in a single part of the body; but for that reason its influence is not confined to the head. There is not the smallest nor the most distant joint, but has its little filament of nerve, leading by sure path up to the great nervous centre; and unseen, unfelt along these hidden channels, flash the commands

of will, which lift the arm or direct the finger. And so the intellectual perception of truth, even of that which seems unpractical, pervades, and by its unconscious influence directs, all human action. For what was reason placed in man, but to direct him? And is there no connection between the conclusions of the reason and the life? The brain may be active, and the nervous cord be sound; but the limb may not obey the volition: it lies dead and paralyzed. Such is the life which does not obey the intellect; it is palsied. Indeed, what can a man live by, if not by his beliefs? By chance, or passion? Who would exalt these to be the helmsmen of life?

I have, then, little sympathy for that view which considers that all doctrines are alike, least of all in religion. I have more respect for my own intellect than to say, that this seems to me to be the truth, but the opinion of any one else is just as good, and just as likely to be true, as mine. Neither do the differences in the religious world concern mere theories. They relate to facts the most weighty and practical. What kind of a being is God? What is our relation to him? What have we to do, and what can we do, to be accepted by him? Is he a stern, unpitying sovereign, exacting the dues of justice to the uttermost farthing? Or is he, not in name alone but in reality, a Father, dealing with us as a perfect father would with his children; loving us still,

even when we forget to love him; loving the sinner, and seeking by all the different ways of his providence to draw him to his truest good? It seems to me that it must make great difference what a man's belief is about this. My views of God are to me full of sunshine and of joy. It is not for us to look sad when he is spoken of. We are speaking of our best Friend. There is no fear connected with the thought. He may punish indeed, and I hope he will, if punishment is needed. I know that the severest discipline will be still in love, and will work out my highest good; and why should I tremble at it?

I think, too, that these bright views are of great importance to the peace and happiness of others, and to their interpreting aright the experiences of life. What kind of a Christian should I be, then, not to wish others to hold them? Common feelings of benevolence merely would make me desire that they should believe thus, and should share in the blessing. Especially is this the case with those who are nearest to me. I should feel sorry, if one of you, my friends, should turn back to those gloomy, and, as I view them, untrue representations of the Infinite Father. Jesus, as I read his words, does not teach us of such a Being. I have not found God to be such to me. I feel sorry when others imagine that he is such to them.

I have been led into this train of thought partly

by some remarks which I heard last week from a person whom I highly respect. We were speaking of the unprosperous condition of a Liberal society in our neighborhood, and he expressed himself somewhat in this wise: "I cannot say that I would be willing to make much effort for its restoration. I am a Unitarian from firmest conviction. I believe that our views of Christianity approach most nearly to the mind of Christ. But yet, if men are only good and moral, if they are good Christians, I do not care much what they believe." Now, I think that this is a very false statement, and more nearly akin to the mocking words of the sceptical Pilate, "What is truth?" than to the sentiment of Him who came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Error is, in its nature, a lie; and lies received into the mind, so far as they have any effect on a man, must have a bad effect upon him. We cannot but admit that there are good Christians in every fold, and therefore good Christians who believe what is not true. We are glad that there are such. We rejoice that Christianity has so strong a power for good, that error mixed with it cannot wholly destroy it. But the good, we must always bear in mind, is in spite of the error, not on account of it. Plant truth in these same good souls, and they would be better still. You may tell me that the error bears good fruit: it is not the error, it is the mingled truth, which

bears the fruit you see; it is the graft, and not the wild olive. I must believe that what is true is better food for human souls to live upon and grow upon than what is false. Take clear poison, and you would die; if there is only a little mixed with what you take, you do not die, though you may be injured by it.

Now, I believe that the views of Liberal Christians in the main are true, and, being true, have a tendency to produce nobler characters in those who receive them than the opposite views; that the man brought up under their legitimate influence will grow up better and more Christ-like than the same man under different influences. The same is true of society. I think that a community will be better off, if it has a Liberal society and Liberal preaching within its limits. Therefore I am glad when my near friends hold to these views, and sorry when one I love gives them up; for I fear that he will not grow so well. I feel it to be my duty, and my pleasure also, to do what I can to spread these same truths in the community, and to promote them in every Christian way.

But this is sectarianism, one may say. What if it be? It may not be so bad as some imagine. There is, indeed, a sectarianism which abuses all beside itself; which slanders and vilifies; which feels bound, in its advocacy of truth, to hate, not only the error, but the errorist. Shun this; for

it is not Christian. But there is a sectarianism which simply respects itself and its own convictions; which honors the truth it believes; and, because it has found happiness and peace in its own beliefs, wishes others also to be happy. This is noble, this is Christian. Brotherly love is one thing; but very different is that charity which goes to its neighbor, and says, "I believe so and so; but your belief is just as good as mine, and just as likely to be true." There is no Christian love in that; rather we should call it the indifference of Pilate. It is time, I believe, to enforce as a duty, not, indeed, partisan zeal and unchristian rancor, but this much of sectarianism: a sacred regard for truth, and a manly respect for our own convictions. This gives opportunity for the exercise of the only Christian love which is worth the name, leading us to acknowledge the full breadth of that chasm which separates us from other sects, and to *love them still.*

My friends, this Liberal Christianity which you have inherited is a noble trust. Will you be of the sect of Pilate, mockingly asking, "What is truth?" Or will you be followers of Him, who, with the divinest charity for the erring and pity for the sinning, yet rejoiced, saying, "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth"?

VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEF ON LIFE.

James i. 22: "BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES."

James ii. 19: "THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE."

WE sometimes hear it said, almost boastingly, that one of the marked characteristics of the present age is its respect for intellect. We have advanced beyond that barbarous state when heroes were men of muscle, who could wield the sword and poise the spear; and now the heroes of mind receive our homage. At first sight, this seems to be true; but, when we examine more carefully, we shall find, I think, reason for doubting whether the intellect receives even a decent respect, to say nothing of worship, in our day. There are enough words of praise, as far as these go, and enough admiration for intellectual power; but words alone are empty sounds. It is easy for one to talk about the nobility of intellect, when he is dazzled by some flash of genius; but does he ennoble the intellect which is in him? This is the test. Do men honor in themselves

that which they almost deify in others? Do we show our respect for it by our obedience? We are all very willing to admire another's intellectual strength; but where is our intellect? Do we guide our own path by the candle which God has lighted within us?

The intellect was not placed in man to be an object of admiration, a means of making a display for the world to wonder at, an ornamental appendage of human life. It is one of the most practical of the human faculties, the guide to every man over a certain part of his life's journey. It deals with truths, and its results are beliefs. It is not all that there is in man, nor is it the highest part of him; but, in its peculiar sphere, it is supreme, and it has a right to our respect and obedience. Two things seem necessarily to be involved in the respect for our own intellects. The first is, that we should give them the privilege of deciding, without bias or prejudice, what is truth; and the second is, when our belief has once been formed, that we should make our life consistent with it. The one we may call intellectual veracity; the other, intellectual honesty.

As to the first, we find that many other things beside the perception of truth are often allowed to influence a man's belief. Intellect takes bribes from self-interest; hopes and fears are apt to throw themselves into the scale; passion warps

the judgment: but one who is true to himself will deal fairly. His beliefs will be colored as little as possible by his prejudices, wishes, or interests; they will be the calm and thoughtful result of his best judgment. The simple question will be, "What is true?" not what will be the effect, or what are the results involved. Such a one will first find out the truth, and then will unhesitatingly accept all its consequences, following implicitly wherever it leads. It is, indeed, difficult always to hold the even balance, and to sit in impartial judgment, when we ourselves are pleaders as well as judges; but he who does this is a noble man. We cannot but honor him, though the beliefs he carries out may be opposed to our own, and may even seem to us to be dangerous in their tendency.

We can respect the great Calvin for his unflinching adherence to the doctrines which he had honestly accepted as true, in spite of the consequences which they involved. Some of his contemporaries shrunk from the legitimate inferences of the doctrine of election; and, while asserting the tenet that some men were elected to everlasting happiness, in order to save God's justice they omitted the twin dogma, that the rest were elected to eternal woe. Men, they said, were not elected to reprobation; but they were merely overlooked in the divine choice. Calvin, with his clear logic, could brook none of this

humane inconsistency; and he expresses himself thus about it: "Many, as it were to excuse God, own election, but deny reprobation. But this is quite silly and childish; for election cannot stand without reprobation. Whom God passes by, those he reprobates; it is one and the same thing." Calvin was right in this. He had convinced himself of the doctrine; and what had come to him in the sacred name of truth, he would not shrink from. He was true to his own intellect.

The second point of which we spoke is even more important than intellectual veracity, on account of its more intimate connection with actual life. The intellect is a practical power; and the purpose of its action is not answered, when the truths which it has accepted are merely enthroned in the mind: they must be enthroned in the life as well. Man does not live that he may believe; but he believes, that he may live. Right living is the end of true believing. Beliefs are barren, unless they are carried into conduct. We render to the intellect its rightful honor and respect, only when we act out its conclusions. This consistency of life with belief is what I mean by intellectual honesty. Is not this a virtue in which we are all too deficient?

It may be objected, that it would, indeed, be well for men to act out their beliefs, if all their beliefs were only true and salutary; but, unfor-

tunately, there are many false and mischievous opinions held in the world. Shall these be acted out? We see men holding doctrines of bad practical tendency, who yet, apparently, are none the worse for them; believing fearful dogmas, and yet just as happy and cheerful as other persons. Is it not well that the heart can show itself wiser than the intellect? Is not this very intellectual falsity a merciful fact for humanity? I admit the fact, but I deny altogether the inference. It is not well that men are ever untrue to their convictions; and for this reason, because intellectual honesty would correct the errors of the intellect. If men would live up to their opinions, their bad beliefs could not last long. There is not a more healthy test which can be applied to any dogma than its practical working. Live it, and that will prove its solidity and worth. A little practical work has a wonderful effect in rationalizing the most crazy theories. Put them in practice uncompromisingly, and soon every one will abandon them. A man thinks that he has discovered, at last, the secret of perpetual motion. You cannot show him the fallacy on paper; but put it into steel: this will test it. The same principle holds good in morals and theology. The wildest theories come into the brains of thinkers, who, in their lonely studies, reconstruct the nature of man and the decrees of God. Let them be honest with themselves, and put

their theories in practice. Let them be thrown into the rough stream of human action, and be allowed to take their chance. Even here, then, I say that it is well that men should be true to their convictions. This is the medicine for the logic-sick intellect.

But we must remember that our inconsistency is shown but seldom in regard to such beliefs as these. It is oftener our highest, our most necessary, our deepest convictions which remain unvitalized and powerless. If we look over the community, we shall find, I think, that Christianity has much more perfectly accomplished its work upon the human intellect than upon human life. The mind is much more thoroughly Christianized than the heart. Men's beliefs about God are quite in conformity with the spirituality of the gospel. Their views upon questions of morality are, in general, quite near to the absolute standard which Christ gives. Their decisions as to the rightfulness or wrongfulness of actions, even of those in which they are personally interested, are usually accurate; and their judgments of their own conduct are tolerably just. So far as the opinions, views, and judgments of men are concerned, Christianity is, in the main, firmly enthroned; but turn to actual human character, and how far do you find that to lay behind their beliefs? We know so much better than we do, and we believe so much better than we live! If

we were only true to our own intellects, we should not be far from the kingdom of heaven. But it seems as if our opinions dwelt far up in the air, without having a foothold on the solid ground of reality. They are not coupled on to real life. They are like machinery that is unconnected with the power-wheel, which whirls round and round, while the machinery does not stir. Our beliefs were intended to be motive-powers in the life: if they are not, they are barren and worthless. What more dangerous state for a man can there be, than when principles are disjoined from practice? How can such a man be reached? What can bridge over the gulf, and join again belief and action? There may be more hope of an honest doubter than of him.

Some men have a great dread of scepticism. It is, indeed, a sad sight to see one who has renounced those fundamental beliefs which must underlie the healthy life and constitute its highest dignity. But, to my mind, there may be a sadder sight even than this. The sceptic may have become bewildered in subtle reasonings: but he is at least consistent in his bewilderment. Which is the worst: to disbelieve, and to act consistently with unbelief; or to receive the most solemn truths with firm conviction, and straightway to live an infidel life? Scepticism is a slight evil in the community, when compared with this fearful divorce of belief from life.

It is not so perilous a state for the individual to be in, who says, honestly and humbly, "I doubt;" for the honest doubt at least reveals signs of life. But he who can say (and it is said sometimes as an excuse), "I suppose that it is wise for me to do this," or "I suppose that I ought to do this," and then does not act, what cure is there for this? It indicates moral paralysis.

Our greatest need is not more belief, but more realization of what we do believe. We all believe enough to be saints, if the dry skeleton of our creeds were only vivified by a consistent life. Who of us approaches in his experience to the uprightness and nobleness of his own convictions? The mind has done its work well; but how much noble material has been stored up ready for use, which is yet unused! How many dead ideas, how many unvitalized beliefs, remain in our inventory of mental property! And these beliefs, which have not yet the warm lifeblood flowing through them, are not insignificant and unpractical; but they are precisely those which, if once in action, would exert the strongest and best influence upon us. It is our best and highest beliefs which are the most inactive. Are there any which enter less into conduct than our religious convictions? Think what we believe, what solemn, what momentous truths, and then see how our life accords with them. Would that we might realize how grand and imposing

they are, as if they had come to us now for the first time!

We believe in God. What consequences are involved to us in that one word, God! It is not possible that a man can truly believe in God, and yet not be a very different person from what he would have been, had he not believed in him. There is no single relation of life, no event, no experience, no duty, which does not depend for its motive and meaning on this primal fact. Does one believe in God, or does he not? On this his life hinges. How differently you would go to meet any duty or any event, whether joyous or grievous, if there be to you a God! You believe that God sees you, that he sees your heart and your life. Can this be believed, and yet it make no difference to you? Who is so thoughtless as not to take more heed to his path, if he feels that the All-seeing Eye is upon him, and follows all his steps? You believe, too, since God has given to you every thing you have, that you must account to him for the use which you make of his gifts. Do you live as stewards, using time, talents, property, as lent by the heavenly Father, in order that you may do a work for him? What one of our beliefs ought to be more practical than this? It will not do to be without God in our pleasure, in our business, in our homes, and then think that all is right, because our atheism is only in the life, and not in the head. If he be

not a living God, but only an assemblage of abstractions which we bring together under a single name, of what use is such an idea to us? If our belief amounts to any thing, it must be a present power within us, the presence of the ever-living God.

Take another of the fundamental articles of our faith. We believe (else why are we here?) in Jesus Christ, and in his gracious mission from God. How can we stop in mere belief? We believe that he brings to us divine commands. Why do we call ourselves Christians, or have any thing to do with Christianity, unless we render obedience to its commands, and make earnest efforts to attain the Christian life? And we believe the fact of Immortality. Can it make no difference to you, whether you are to perish as a brute or to live for ever? whether existence is to be regarded as an objectless journeying toward an eternal sleep, or the active preparation for a never-ending immortality? There can be but one answer. Now, consider what these articles of belief really are, God, Christ, Immortality! Looking at them merely from the intellectual point of view, ought they not to be the moving powers of human life? Can they be consistently any thing less than the very foundation on which all action and character must rest? Are they this? Go among the men and women who hold these grand truths as the fundamental articles

of their creeds. Do they live them out? Do we see these persons in the trials and joys of their homes, living cheerfully, kindly, religiously, as in the very presence of the ever-living Father, and accountable to him for all their actions? Do we find, that, in their daily work and business, they unhesitatingly abjure acts which are forbidden by the precept and spirit of Christ? Do we observe that their whole demeanor is sobered and elevated by the consciousness of their great destiny? Judge for yourselves; judge of yourselves. It does seem as if the face of society and our own lives would be very different from what they now are, if these ideas were living powers; if they were only permitted to come forth from the temples where we worship them, and to mingle in the current of our daily thought and feeling.

What we need, then, most of all, is to change our dead beliefs into a living operative faith. Let the God in whom we believe go out with us into the world, and be a presence in our business to keep us from all meanness and dishonesty. Let our belief in Christ make us Christians. And let us not only say that we believe in a future life, but let us act as if we thought that this world was not all. We believe that there is but one purpose to which life can worthily be given: to that let us devote our lives from this day henceforth. Be true to your own intellects! Live your beliefs like honest men! Let there be

all needed caution and hesitation in forming your opinions; but have no faltering afterwards. Carry out your belief uncompromisingly. Bind, by links of steel, every conviction to its execution. Be not hearers of the word alone, nor believers of the word alone, but be doers of the word. Let us bring our Christianity down from the upper chambers of the intellect, where we have stored it, that it may come into life afresh, as blood of our blood, and soul of our soul!

IX.

FILL UP WHAT IS LACKING IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

Col. i. 24: "WHO (I) NOW REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST IN MY FLESH, FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE, WHICH IS THE CHURCH."

HOW wonderful is the relation between life and Scripture! Each is the interpreter of the other; the written word, and the lesson of experience in the school of life, combining their instruction, and each explaining the other's mysteries. It sometimes happens, when we have been long perplexed and harassed with a painful experience, wondering what it can mean and what can be its good, not knowing even how to reconcile it with the fatherly love of God, it sometimes happens that from some oft-repeated passage of the Bible the light will break which supplies what we need. We had often read it before, but never attached any important meaning to it; but now it seems as if written for us, since the mysterious word and the mysterious experience explain each other. Considered apart, we hardly know how to interpret them;

but, taken together, both are clear. It may be the Bible, which is obscure. There are many passages which have sorely puzzled commentators, and our text is among the number. They have found it difficult to understand and to harmonize these with their formularies of faith and established opinions. Experience here, as in so many cases, may be a better interpreter than the critics. Explain God's word by his works. Try to find its interpretation in real life, in your own life, if you can, where the comment is written by God's own hand. Let us, then, take up together our text and its living illustration: "I rejoice in my sufferings, and fill up in my flesh that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church."

In this sentence, two facts are stated; and from these a third may be legitimately deduced. In the first place, there is something lacking in the sufferings of Christ, some deficiency in his mediatorial work which needs to be supplied. The text affirms, in the second place, that this lack or deficiency can be supplied by something which men may do; in short, Paul says that he fills up the lack by his own sufferings. And, thirdly, we may infer, from these two facts, that the effects produced by human sufferings may be the same in kind as those of Christ, though infinitely smaller in degree; in other words, that the effects of Christ's sufferings and death in the

redemption of the world are not mysterious and peculiar in their nature, but analogous to those which we see follow from the sufferings of men. You will notice that the statements of the text, and the inference which naturally follows from them, have a direct bearing on some very important theological questions, especially on that greatest question of controversy, the efficacy of the death of Christ in human redemption. I see not how this passage can be explained consistently with the popular belief on this subject, without perverting its obvious meaning. Indeed, the difficulty in its interpretation seems to me to come almost wholly from the attempt to reconcile it with the doctrine. For ourselves, we are perplexed with no such difficulty; we see a plain meaning in the words, and we are willing to believe that Paul meant what he says; and, more than this, for us the passage contains precious truth. We must bear in mind that the same Paul is speaking, who, in other figurative passages, furnishes most of the proof-texts for the doctrine of the vicarious nature of Christ's death. Here he is speaking plainly, and without figure, on the same subject; and what does he say?

As plainly as words can express it, he says this: that there is something lacking or deficient in the sufferings of Christ. Dogmatists tell us of the infinite sacrifice, of the all-sufficient atone-

ment, of the complete satisfaction wrought out for sinners by the death of the Saviour. Paul speaks differently, of "that which is lacking" in those sufferings. What does he mean by this? To know what the lack is, we must first settle the perplexing question, What is the efficacy of Christ's sufferings? Upon whom is the work of the atonement wrought? I answer, and I think that the text we are considering, as well as the general tenor of the New Testament, confirm it, that the efficacy of those sufferings is upon men. God is not influenced by them; they were not offered to appease his wrath, nor to buy off his justice; they do not pay to him the sinner's penalty. Men were the only persons who needed to be changed. God is the loving Father always, and no change is needed in him; but men are not obedient children. The sufferings of Christ must have their efficacy upon them, and they are efficacious in drawing men to God.

But it is objected, if this simple and natural explanation of their efficacy be the true one, why is it, that, throughout the Scriptures, so great stress is laid upon the sufferings and death of Christ? We answer, because they are the most important and the essential parts of the life and work of Christ. They do not accomplish the whole; they do not miraculously influence God and man. But they do much; they have been

the great instruments in the redemption of the world. The history of Christianity affords a striking fulfilment of the words of Christ, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." From the cross have come the most potent influences for the salvation of men. I believe that the death of Christ was essential to his work; that without this last attestation to the truth, without the name of the crucified one, Christianity could never have triumphed. At any rate, we know that God in his wisdom ordained it thus. We cannot spare one midnight watch, one tear-drop, one cry of agony; least of all can we spare the cross. We do not believe, however, that these do their work by any mysterious process; that in them Christ was bearing the wrath of God, and suffering the bitter punishment of the sins of the world. He suffered for us, but not in our stead. If this had not been so, if it had been a mysterious reconciliation of an offended God which he effected, could Paul have said that there was an incompleteness in the sufferings of Christ, and an incompleteness which he himself could fill up? No: it is the reconciliation of sinful man to the loving God, which is the reconciliation and atonement wrought by Christ.

We are now ready to consider what is the deficiency in those sufferings to which Paul alludes. How clear our text is, in the light of

the truth just stated! The deficiency is with men. All men are not redeemed from sin; the sufferings and death of Christ have been in vain, so far as some are concerned; his atonement has not reached them; they are not reconciled to God, but they are yet in their sins. This is a simple matter of fact. Christ has suffered and died; and yet he has not accomplished all God's purpose, he has not redeemed all. There is, then, a deficiency in those sufferings as a means of redemption; and this deficiency exists now, and will exist so long as all men are not good children of God.

How, then, is this deficiency supplied? Paul in our text mentions one way. "I fill up," he says, "that which is behind." He is writing to the Colossians from his prison-house at Rome; and he rejoices in his sufferings, because they supply, in some measure, what was wanting. This is strictly in conformity with our view of the efficacy of Christ's death. The apostle had followed in his Master's steps: he had taken up his cross, and journeyed on. Probably as many of the Colossians had been drawn to Christ by Paul's sufferings in behalf of the faith as by his preaching. Nor is this true of Paul alone. Christ has consecrated pain and suffering for all coming time. They are the ministers of God for the salvation of men. It is still the cross everywhere, the cross reared now as well as that

which stood on Calvary, which is the most effective human instrument for the advancement of the gospel in individual hearts and in the world. In this way does God often fill up now to his children that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. There is a deep spiritual meaning in the text, which is the key to many of our perplexing experiences, if we will but use it. Are not the sufferings and death of Christ lacking in some measure of influence to you? Yes, if their purpose is not answered, if they have not led you to God. The deficiency must be supplied. How shall it be done? The cross of Christ has been to you of no avail. God may, in his love for you, lay the cross on one you love yet more than Christ, if, perchance, his cross has not wrought out for you and for your loved one the needful grace.

I think that this thought of the apostle throws much light upon many trying experiences of life. It helps us to solve that dark mystery of pain which comes more or less into every lot, and which must be borne, if the end cannot otherwise be answered. There are some sufferings which cause us no surprise; they seem to be only what we should expect as the natural penalty for the violation of God's laws. When very wicked men suffer, we have a feeling that they are only receiving their deserts. If this were all, earthly suffering would furnish no difficulty

to our faith. But this is not all. The good, the holy, the pure, the innocent, suffer; and sometimes, we think, even more than others. What can be the reason of this? Is God just, thus to afflict his best children? They are following in the thorny path which the Master trod before them; they are bearing the cross for the good of men. Perhaps it is our friends who are the sufferers. We cannot see why they should endure weariness and pain, and at last die. Is God just to them? It may be that years of pain are to be borne, and that the body is to be bowed down with a life-long and hopeless disease. It may be that the blight of an early death may fall upon a family, and crush out its joy. Perhaps it is a child who is the sufferer: its few days are days of pain; and, when it dies, a feeling of relief comes into the heart of the parents, because their child is at rest. Why did God allow this? My friends, they may have been bearing the cross for you. They were filling up in your hearts that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ. They suffered, that, by the ministry of tears, your souls might be opened to receive the gracious influences from heaven, and your hearts be drawn to the Father. Has this cross, too, been in vain, and is that which is lacking to you in the sufferings of Christ not yet filled up?

This dark fact of human suffering has, then,

a divine significance. It is not for the sufferer alone. Jesus was not only made perfect himself by suffering; but to his cross how many sin-sick souls have looked, and been healed! And to men it may be given to continue the same blessed work by the same means. Christ did not do all which was needful for the redemption of the world from sin. God has required each generation to do for itself some part of the redemptive work. Perhaps it may, in his providence, devolve on you to make the connecting link between the heart of your child and God. Christ has offered his great sacrifice, but it does not reach him. The great cable now lies dumb beneath the mighty waters. No whisper of thought runs along its silent wires. Expectant souls are listening, craving but a word; yet it speaks not. It may be, that but a single inch, but a hair's breadth, of the three thousand miles of wire is parted; yet that one hair's breadth makes useless all the rest. And so it is with the human soul. Christ has offered his great sacrifice and done his mediatorial work, and yet it touches not the heart of your child. One little link is unconnected. Your sacrifice may be God's appointed means of welding the broken link; and, when that is done, the celestial pulses may flow on unimpeded in their sanctifying course. It is an inspiring thought, my brethren, that, in the sufferings which God appoints for us, we may have

some share even in Christ's great work; that we may fill up that which is lacking in his sacrifice. And if this be so, can we not have patience to bear worthily our cross; knowing that if we so do, "as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

X.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

John xvii. 20, 21: "NEITHER PRAY I FOR THESE ALONE, BUT FOR THEM ALSO WHICH SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH THEIR WORD; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US."

AT first sight, Christianity seems to be founded upon two opposite and almost mutually destructive principles. In the first place, it is intensely individual and personal. It deals, not with mankind, but with individuals; not with all men, but with each man. Other religions have been national; they have addressed themselves to the wants, and intertwined themselves with the prejudices, of a single race; and so they have been local and partial and transient. But Christianity, in that it has adapted itself to each man, has spoken to all men. Through its very individualism, it is universal. It passes by all adventitious circumstances of race, education, condition, and speaks to man as man; and, wherever a human heart is beating, it is sure of a response. Christ comes to you, and speaks to you, as if you were the only

child of the Father in heaven. Upon you singly shines that infinite love; you are the object of his special care and his watchful guidance; over you he gives his angels charge, to keep you in all your ways. Every promise and every warning, every word of encouragement and every expression of affection, all are yours. Duty, with its solemn obligation, comes home to you alone; no other can take your place, or assume your responsibility; and when that duty is neglected, "thou art the man." For each sin committed, for each guilt incurred, but one can make amends, but one can repent. "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy child;" and the sweet whisper of forgiveness is for the penitent himself to hear, standing alone by the mercy-seat. And for you God sent his Son into the world: Jesus came and taught and suffered and died, to lead you to his Father and your Father. His line of discipleship may divide asunder the closest earthly relations, husband and wife, mother and daughter, the one following, the other rejecting, the dear Master; because each by himself has his choice to make, his stand to take, for or against him. Each soul stands alone in its most momentous concerns, in its dealing with God, and in its responsibility to him.

Thus intensely personal is the religion of Christ; and yet, at the same time, it is intensely

social in all its tendencies. Individualism is joined with fellowship. Never was there a religion whose natural effect has been to draw its disciples so strongly together. The love for the brethren whom we have seen, is the witness and testimony to our love for the Father whom we have not seen. In the early times, so complete was the union of disciples, that they even had all things common. They were united as one man, in their efforts to spread the gospel. They shared the joys of their precious faith together, and thus increased them. Their zeal was quickened, and fanned into a burning flame, by communion with the brethren. They found help, as they pursued the quiet path of daily Christian duty, by walking in it together, each helping the other with a brother's hand. Though we have not in our day the warmth of brotherly feeling which animated them, we have yet enough of fellowship, to see that our faith is, in its nature, cementing, cohesive, vivifying.

Does this seem a strange conjunction, individualism and fellowship, both working harmoniously? The blending of these two dissimilar tendencies is essential to the best development of Christian life in the individual and in the Church. They are like the centripetal and centrifugal forces in nature, which are opposite indeed, but are both essential to hold suns and stars in their orbits. The universe would become chaos,

if one of these should rule alone. And so, in the religion of Christ, the very strength and efficacy of its fellowship comes from the fact that it is not a form, but is based on an actual affinity of individual wills, purposes, and sympathies.

There is a union which practically ignores the individual, sinking him in the mass. It is disastrous in its results, and fatal to all true nobleness of character. The manliness and strength are crushed out of that man who suffers himself thus to be joined with his fellows. He is only a cipher in society, adding merely his dead weight, not his intelligent will and independent thought, to the great whole. Neither is this mechanical union, even when it is realized in the highest degree, effective for practical work. It does not bring the whole man into its service, but only the weakest part of him; it does not enlist the energy of his will, the living power of his mind, the inspiration of his soul. It is the force of gravitation, not of life. And it is weak even in its cohesive power. It is the unity of the sand-hill, the particles of which are close to each other, but have no vital connection, no affinity. Once separated, they will never come together again. The true Christian fellowship may be likened to the attraction between the magnet and the particles of iron. The one draws all within its range to itself; and each particle,

once joined, becomes itself magnetic to attract others. So, when the attraction of the Saviour's love reaches human hearts, they are not merely drawn to him, but to each other; and each becomes himself a centre of attraction to all about him.

So the unity which Christ must bring about among his disciples is not a mechanical union, but a unity of will, of purpose, of life. It is not outward conjunction; but it is, in one word, fellowship. Coming together does not make Christians one; but they cannot help being drawn together, because they are one: in so far as they are Christians, they sympathize in a common purpose, they rejoice in a common joy, they are busy in the same work, and they love the same Master. They are fellow-soldiers. Have I used the wrong word here, as an illustration? Some have indeed said, that, the nearer to a machine an army could be brought, the better would be the army. This cannot be true, except in a very limited sense. The union even of an army ought not to be mechanical, if one would secure its highest efficiency. I remember that one of our best generals, when speaking to me most enthusiastically of the soldiers under him, as the highest praise and strongest ground of his confidence in them, said, "The very privates in my army discuss the deepest questions of the Constitution; they know exactly what they are fighting for." And was he not

right? Intelligent purpose adds untold power. A man is inspired to do and dare, by the great cause for which he stands as the representative, and of which, in time of need, he feels that he is the standard-bearer. This is the unity which is needed in the Church, an intelligent unity, the unity of the spirit. It is a weak bond of association, when men take part merely in the observance of the same ceremonies, and in the use of the same form of sound words. But when Christians come together and join hands, warmed by a common zeal, and devoted to a common purpose, and filled with mutual love, they are invincible. Mere formal union, then, is not sufficient; but unity of spirit, fellowship.

I believe that here is our great weakness as a denomination. The connection is very loose which binds one church to another. We take care of ourselves, and let other churches take care of themselves: live if they can, die if they must; but the living or dying of one is of no great interest to the others. Whatever we do, we do by ourselves. And so we lose that great source of strength, which is, in its abuse, sectarianism, but which, in its proper use, is church-fellowship. We talk about being a small denomination, as if that were a good reason why we do so little. There was a little Christian community in Herrnhut in Germany, numbering only about six hundred members, or not many more than we have

in this society; a church it was, in the true sense of that word, devoted, united in spirit as well as in form. They felt that upon Christians devolved the duty of spreading the gospel. They did not wait till they had grown larger, but they began the work at once. In nine years, they had established missionaries at the very extremities of the earth; at Greenland, St. Thomas, St. Croix, Surinam, among the Indians of North America, the negroes of South Carolina, at Lapland, Tartary, Algiers, the Cape of Good Hope, the island of Ceylon, and elsewhere. And this was done by a small church of only six hundred members! We need not excuse ourselves from any Christian work, even the greatest, because we are few in numbers: "all things are possible to him that believeth."

And so, in our relation to each other as fellow-Christians, we must not stand so much upon our individuality. We must not make our very religion a selfish possession; we must not be isolated from each other, so far as communion of religious thought and experience and sympathy are concerned, as if we were in the desert. We must receive and give, help and be helped. We are not three or four hundred individuals wending our lonesome way through trials and temptations: but we are a Christian Church, bound to help each other; brothers, according to the dear old Christian name. We can do some-

thing, as individual workers, for the cause of Christ; but how much less than if we were one body, bearing down with irresistible force upon all evil and vice! What if General Gilmore should fire continually at Fort Sumter with two hundred one-pound guns? The rebels there would laugh him to scorn. One two-hundred-pounder would be more efficient than a thousand such pieces. We can hardly estimate the influence which a firmly united body, if consisting only of a hundred Christians, would exert in a community: it would be well-nigh irresistible.

I love to think of our society here, brethren, as a great Christian family. We all, I hope, with differing degrees of earnestness, are seeking the same end, and trying to be faithful to the same Lord. We own one common allegiance. When prosperity comes to any, I hope that we are all glad. When we pray for the afflicted, I hope that all our hearts lift up their prayers, in Christian sympathy, that the good Father may comfort those who mourn, and make up to them their loss out of his infinite fulness; and that, as one after another of those who have been with us passes on, we may take up the duty which they have relinquished, and leave not God's work undone. We have in common, brethren, much that is best and holiest in our lives. Can we not throw off our reserve, and permit the love which Christians should bear to each other

to grow warm by expression? We know not how much God's work would gain, how much each one of us would gain in joy, in strength, in earnestness, if we drew nearer together, and joined hands in true Christian fellowship. My friends, Christ's prayer was not alone for his disciples, but for all who should believe in him through their word; "that they all may be one," one in spirit, in affection, in sympathy, in all Christian work.

XI.

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS.

Acts i. 8: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

WITH how much interest would the whole Christian world hear the intelligence, if some scholar, searching among the musty parchments of Oriental monasteries, should discover a journal kept by the Apostle Peter during his Christian work; or a missionary record of the Apostle Paul; or, perhaps, a little history of the beginning of the Church, written by some companion and friend of the apostles!

In the book of the Acts, we have what may be considered a combination of these three. It was written by an intelligent and educated man; a native of Antioch, which was at that time the literary metropolis of the world; one who was by profession a physician. He had the best means of informing himself, both from personal observation and from the mouth of the actors in those scenes, of the truth of the history he would

relate. He had become acquainted, in his extensive travels, with the principal men in the Christian Church; and he himself was a companion and intimate friend of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. In fact, he accompanied Paul to Rome, when he went thither a prisoner, to abide the issue of his appeal to the emperor. It was at Rome, under the eye and supervision of the apostle, we may suppose, that he wrote the history which we call the Book of the Acts. It was written, in the first instance, for a personal friend of his, an eminent Italian Christian, by the name of Theophilus; the same person for whose instruction he had just before prepared what we call the Gospel of Luke.

It covers the space of only about thirty-two years; but what momentous years they were in the history of the world! It narrates the events from the ascension of Christ to the end of Paul's ministry. How much is included in that short time! Jesus had finished his personal work on earth. He had given to the world his Father's message. He had manifested God to man. He had been crucified. He had risen from the dead. The precious gospel was now intrusted to human hands, that through them it might influence the world. The book of the Acts tells us how Christianity came in contact with actual life; how it took its first step toward that universal dominion, which is its right and its sure prom-

ise. Scarcely ever was a faith more centred in its founder than was Christianity in Jesus during his stay on earth. The disciples were only scholars in his school. They hardly thought or acted for themselves. In every case of difficulty or doubt, they referred to their Master. They took no responsibility; they felt the burden of no care. But a change has now come. They are alone. They have just heard Christ's last farewell, as he ascended blessing them; and they have just returned, joyful and sad too, to Jerusalem.

At this point our history begins. What a beginning! A little company, dispirited, bewildered, almost stunned by the events of the past seven weeks, which included the cruel death, the resurrection, and the ascension of their Master, they met in the upper chamber of a Hebrew house, but one hundred and twenty in all; the fruits of Christ's three years' ministry. Here was the first church, the only Christian church in the world, numbering scarcely more names than are attached to our own simple confession, which is the same as theirs, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. From this time forward, Christianity goes forth conquering and to conquer. In this book is narrated the first steps of this marvellous progress. The historian tells us of the wonders of the day of Pentecost, of the first sermon by a Christian preacher, of mir-

acles and signs wrought in the name of Jesus, of the first martyrdom. He tells us how the gospel passed over to the Gentiles. Perhaps, as we read of that, we may not appreciate its full significance. We are of the Gentile branch of the Church. The question was, whether the gospel should be offered to us. Hitherto it had been addressed merely to the Jews. The bigoted Jewish prejudices of the apostle were overcome only by the special interposition of the Holy Spirit; and, in the baptism of Cornelius, that question was for ever settled. Christianity rose from a sect of Judaism into a universal religion.

We have in this book, also, the history of him to whom was intrusted the special work of bearing the gospel to all nations; the record of the marvellous transformation of a Pharisee of the Pharisees to a Christian missionary, of a persecutor to an apostle; the account of the words and labors so abundant, of the perils by land and perils by sea, of the great Saul of Tarsus, who, next to the Master, has left the deepest impress of himself on the Christian Church, and who has given to us more than a fourth part of the writings of the New Testament.

How much of interest and of instruction for us this little history by the "beloved physician" contains! It leads us back to the feeble and unnoticed beginnings of our faith; and it gives us a glimpse of that early Christian life which

wrought such wonders upon the world. As we trace thus the footsteps of the Holy Spirit in history, we prize more highly that religion which, through such providence, has come down to us; which God has now intrusted to our feeble hands, to be cherished and to be propagated. How wonderful was the progress which our religion made in that short time whose history is here recorded! At the beginning of the book, we see a little band of believers, gathered, in doubt and in fear, under the shadow of the Jewish temple. Thirty years after, when Luke was writing this account at Rome, the name of Jesus had been proclaimed, and flourishing churches had been established, throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. Does Christianity have that life and that power now? There are some features peculiar to the apostolic administration of the gospel, and to the spirit of the early Christians, which may account, in part at least, for this wonderful success of their labors.

It is very instructive for us to see, as we can see in this history, the form in which these early preachers presented Christianity to those whom they would lead to receive it. Did they present a system of belief to the acceptance of those who heard them? Very far from it. The burden of their preaching, as here recorded, from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost to Paul's preaching at Rome, is simply this: "Repent, and be

baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." The creed in whose name such marvels of conversion were wrought was a very simple one. It had but one article: "Jesus is the Christ." Would that the Church had always adhered to the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus! We find in this book few words which bear on the controversies of later times. Sectarian theologians rarely come to its plain and easy pages to draw the proof-texts with which to uphold a favorite dogma or to ban heresy. The simple reason why they are not found here is, I think, because these controversies and these dogmas were born long after these words were written.

One might say, then, that the book of the Acts has no dogmatic value. On the contrary, it seems to me to be of inestimable value in reference to this very subject. The significance of its omissions weighs more even than strong assertions would weigh. Apply this to a single doctrine (and it may be applied to many others): I mean the doctrine of the Trinity. We have in this book the history of the founding of the Christian Church. We have the addresses of the apostles to those to whom they would explain what Christianity was. It covers the time during which our religion spread most rapidly among those who before were entirely ignorant of it, and during which it gained its foothold in the world. The fundamental truths of the religion

must necessarily appear prominent here. The doctrine of the Trinity, so remarkable in itself, so new, so opposed to all Jewish views, could not silently have taken its place among received truths. If actually taught by the apostles, it is incredible that we should find no allusion to it in this history. Yet we find not a hint of it in the record of these thirty years of apostolic labor and success. I cannot avoid the conclusion that it formed no part of the primitive Christian faith. If the doctrine was believed, then, it would have left tokens of itself. We find these marks, indeed, in Christian history; but not till three hundred years later, in the corrupt and philosophizing age of Constantine.

Even more in contrast with the present times was the spirit which filled those early believers; the spirit of Christian love, harmony, and good-will. That one relation of Christian fellowship outweighed all other relations. They were as one family. What an attractive picture is given of their Christian love in this book! It is said, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common." This new feeling of brotherly love repressed all selfish feelings; and the wealthier among them regarded their property as not their own in any selfish sense, so ready were they to

share it with their needy brethren. They were all as brothers together. It was delightful to belong to such a community; and it is no wonder that a body pervaded with such a spirit should increase so rapidly. They simply lived up to the rule of Christ, and obeyed his law of love.

Another characteristic of the early Christian community which is recorded in our history, was a direct product of the religion of Christ, and contributed much to its wonderful progress: I mean the missionary spirit. Their love, deep as it was for their own brotherhood, yet embraced all men. It sought to draw all into the blessed circle of Christian joy and fellowship. The last charge of Christ to his apostles was that they should teach all nations; and they began immediately and in earnest to enter on this great work. The book of the Acts gives us an account of these efforts for the propagation of the gospel. It is, in fact, a missionary journal. Thus did the Christian community grow strong at home, by what it did abroad. In imparting to others, it increased its own store; and soon Christian communities sprung up in all the principal cities of the Roman Empire, filled with the same spirit of brotherly love, of loyalty to the Master. They prized Christianity for the salvation it had brought to them; and how could they neglect to lead others into the same blessed light and

peace? They were true to that great law of ecclesiastical and individual Christian life, that, in order to live, we must grow; that, in order to keep our own faith, we must impart it to others.

Do we wonder, as in this simple narrative we trace God's marvellous work accomplished by means of his chosen instruments? We have the same gift which filled them with such rapture, and inspired them to such sacrifices. We have still the everlasting gospel. It has not lost one jot of its power or of its inspiration. If it fails, it is because the human hearts which receive it are waxed cold, and respond not to its stirring influences. The same message which Paul and Peter proclaimed, we offer to-day. The burden of Christian preaching is still the same. Would we renew in the Church the glories of the apostolic age? We must bring the Church back to the apostolic pattern, to its simple faith, to its earnest zeal for the advancement of Christ's cause, to its rule of love.

XII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Rom. v. 1, 2: "THEREFORE, BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM ALSO WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND."

NEARLY the whole of Paul's letter to the Romans is devoted to the exposition and illustration of the grounds of man's acceptance with God. God sent us into this world. We must answer to him for the life we live. What in our life and character does he approve and look upon with favor? Living in what way, will he accept us as his dutiful children? In other words, what are the grounds of acceptance and of salvation, and what justifies us before God? Paul answers, that we are justified by faith; that this is the righteousness which God accepts. "Thus do we have access into that grace wherein we stand."

You notice how much importance Paul attaches to this view. He considers it to be the very essence of the gospel, the greatest of all its blessed revelations. He returns to it again and again in his Epistles; he explains and enforces

it; he illustrates it on every side. The doctrine is no less important and no less vital to Christianity now. It is not of temporary application, but it is of permanent and unchangeable interest. Let us, then, see if we may not arrive at a clear idea of what righteousness by faith is, that we may apply the joy-giving truth which it expresses to our own practical comfort and peace.

Perhaps we may come to a clearer understanding of our subject, by considering that doctrine to which Paul opposes this. He is constantly comparing the righteousness by faith, which justifies, with the righteousness by the law, which cannot justify. What is this legal righteousness, against which he so often argues and exhorts? He himself says, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which *doeth* those things shall live by them." Here the emphatic word is *doing*. A man is righteous according to the law, when he obeys it completely, when he fulfils every requisition, when he sins not in a single respect. There are certain things which revelation and our own consciences assure us to be our duty. The law commands us inexorably to do these things, and to fail not in the slightest particular. It has no lenity, no adaptation to human weakness; but it is hard and unrelenting, and it declares that we must do, or suffer the penalty. It takes no account of excuses; it has no indulgence for partial perform-

ances; it demands the exact, the entire obedience. Nothing less satisfies its claims; nothing short of this complete fulfilment makes a man righteous by the law. Thought, word, act, all must be exactly true, swerving not a hair's breadth from the right line.

Now, if any man could offer this perfect obedience, we might perhaps say that he had earned his salvation: though even then he could hardly think of merit; for, "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done [only] that which it was our duty to do." Such a man has no merit even then; for he has received all that he has earned. Yet, if one had this perfect obedience, he would be "justified by works." By these must he be justified, according to the law, if he be at all.

But who has this legal righteousness, this perfect obedience? Will you expect it of man, feeble, imperfect, erring, who too often chooses evil, and, even when he chooses good, so often does what is wrong? Will you tell him to earn his salvation; to trust in his own righteousness, which merits heaven? God pity the man who has nothing but his own merit to stand upon! We do not merit the enjoyment of this world; how much less the joy of heaven! Who can, I do not say who does, but who can, have this entire obedience? Can you, my friend? Think

what the law requires. Christ sums it up briefly: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." It is "with the whole heart," and "thy neighbor as thyself." Can you offer that? Then, and then only, talk about merit in the sight of God, and hope to be justified by works. Who of us would dare to rest upon that, as his only hope? How far short does the best obedience come of this standard! Who of us could stand up without trembling, and utter the heathen's prayer, "Lord, give me what I deserve"? No: there is no perfect obedience; and he who approaches nearest to it is only the more painfully conscious of his failures, of his shortcomings, of his sinfulness, as he compares himself with the perfect and holy law of God.

There would be nothing left for the best man but despair, if complete obedience were the only way to God's favor. But "thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." We are not required to earn heaven. God's grace is free; his mercy is unbought. He, in his love, counts faith unto us for righteousness. What, then, is that faith which justifies us, and which God will accept in lieu of that perfect outward obedience which is impossible?

We find that the apostle does not mean by

the term any single act, but a temper of mind pervading all acts. It is the temper of filial love and obedience; it is the earnest desire to do God's will; it is the spirit of self-surrender. The mission of Jesus was to say to men, not "Do, and you shall be accepted," but "Try to do, strive to do, desire to do what you can, and God will count that striving as righteousness to you; he will accept it." In brief and plain words, this doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law is this: if your will is consecrated to God, if you sincerely and heartily try to be faithful, (though your experience be that of Paul, and you fain would say with him, "The good which I would I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do,") yet God in mercy accepts that will, and, notwithstanding all your imperfections, counts you as his child. Sinful as we all are, how much we need that merciful word! Where could we rest without it? What would be our hope? It would be a crushing weight, if we had to carry alone the burden of all our sins. The better a man is, the more fearful is his consciousness of unworthiness. We long to rest on something besides our own deeds; we want to anchor our hopes outside of ourselves, even on the Father's mercy. We long to cast our burden on one mightier than we. The revelation of righteousness by faith is the peace-giving answer to this longing. God justifies us, not by

our works, but by our purposes; not by our actions, but by our hearts.

To the weary, to the struggling, to those crushed with the sense of sin, this doctrine comes like a benediction. It does not set us free from work nor excuse us from striving; but it gives the assurance, that our work, imperfect as it is, and our striving, if it be earnest, shall be accepted. If our faith be true, it must be joined to works. Do you think that a man can desire with all his heart to do God's will, and yet not do it? Must not the sincere faith, the true desire, be followed by consistent doing? Surely this must follow, or the faith is vain. You may know that the root is dead, if the branches send forth no leaves. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

This doctrine of the apostle, then, notwithstanding its obscure sound, which seems to connect it rather with metaphysical theology than with practical life, is really of universal application and of pressing need to all of us. Who does not need the assurance which it gives? I have known those who have expected too much of themselves. There are some who feel afraid that they are not Christians, because, though they have the earnest desire to obey, they come so far short of their aim. They feel unhappy and distrustful. Now, there is such a thing as being too

anxious. We can imagine a person so overpowered with the memory of past sins, and with the fear of temptations which may come, as to be unfitted to fight the good fight. It was wise counsel of the apostle, that we should forget the things which are behind, and press onward to those things which are before. Cast off the burden of the past, and do the best you can in the present, where alone duty lies. When determining the ground of confidence, look not so much to what you do as to what you desire and purpose. Are you resolved to be a Christian? Are you trying to be a Christian? Then you are already "justified by faith." Accept the gracious assurance, and have the peace with God which comes from righteousness by faith. He that wills to do His will, inherits the promise. You must be sure that you are really desirous to do it, that you are earnestly trying to do it; and then, however great your shortcomings, you shall yet have peace. Know that the righteousness which is of faith and repentance is accepted by God.

On this we must all rest. If God required perfect obedience as the only condition of acceptance, what would be our hope? But in mercy he accepts us, if we only seek to be accepted. Christ owns as his disciples even those weak ones, who through many sins are feebly but earnestly endeavoring to obey him. The world

disowns a man on account of sin; it scorns the sinner: but the repentant sinner is owned by the forgiving Master, and is accepted by the all-merciful Father. Blessed be that Father for his tender love! Blessed be that Master for the revelation of mercy which came though him, and of which his life and death were the brightest manifestation! Whoever tries to be a Christian is accepted as a disciple. He may come with all his burden of sin, and may cast it on the Lord, and go on his way penitent and rejoicing; he may have peace with God; he may feel the blessed assurance of forgiveness and of acceptance.

What more favorable condition could we ask than this, which is freely offered to us? It is not perfection nor sinlessness, but only the surrender of our will to God, the earnest desire to be obedient. There is no peace in legal righteousness; there is no peace in earning salvation: but there is peace and blessed assurance in the righteousness which is by faith. As Christians, my brethren, "we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

XIII.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

1 Cor. iii. 16: "KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU?"

IF you read over the New Testament carefully, you will find on almost every page mysterious words about the "Spirit," the "Holy Spirit," or the "Holy Ghost," which is only another translation of the same word. Christ, in his last conversation with his disciples, promises that the Father will send to them another Comforter, when he is taken away, who shall abide with them for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, who shall dwell with them, and shall be in them. In the book of the Acts and in the letters of the apostles, we find that this promise was fulfilled among the early Christians. We meet constantly in those records such phrases as "speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance," "led by the Spirit," "the diversities of gifts which come through the Spirit," "filled with the Spirit," "the Spirit dwelling in them," "the communion and partaking of the Spirit," and numberless others of the same character. These words plainly point to something of which those early disciples had

practical experience. It was something which they actually received. What did this "gift of the Spirit" mean to them? It meant that God dealt with their spirits to influence them for their good, to quicken them to duty, to enlighten their ignorance, to fill their hearts with joy and peace, and to inspire them with a power to feel and to think and to act beyond themselves. It meant that God acted upon them, not merely outwardly, through instruments, as upon the world, but directly upon their souls.

We do not doubt the record of the New Testament; we believe that the early Christians actually received this gift. Yet, as we read these glowing words about the Holy Spirit, they seem like the fossil remains of an extinct experience. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost is something vague and ghostly; real to the companions of the apostles, but not real to us. We believe in it as history; but it is not to us a living truth, the statement of a present experience.

But when did this direct influence of God upon the human soul cease? We find no record of the fact of such cessation in the New Testament. No limitation is made, either in the promise or in its fulfilment, to the Christians of that single age. Christ does not promise the Comforter to his followers of the next generation after his crucifixion, but to all true disciples of his. It is for all Christians and for all time.

It is true that the outward form of the divine influence may differ with the needs of different ages. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common profit," says Paul; and so, from age to age, it takes that form which will best answer the wants of the human soul. In the first age, the Spirit manifested itself, in some cases, in the power of working miracles. That special development of power passed away with the special need. We enjoy it no longer, because we need it not. But though there are diversities of gifts, yet it is the same Spirit.

The divine influence remains; it is the ever-living God, who is no respecter of persons, whom we worship. We, too, are his children. He loves us, as he loved the early disciples of Christ. I believe, then, that the promise of Jesus and the utterances of his apostles are not merely the records of a venerable but buried experience. The promise has not yet been withdrawn. Disciples still are baptized, as of old, into the name of the Holy Ghost. The dispensation of the Spirit has not yet closed.

But where, in our present experience, can we find the facts which verify this doctrine, that human spirits are not cut off from the parent Spirit, but that God now enters into human souls and inspires them? The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the doctrine of the direct, immediate influence from God upon the soul of man. Do

we find any trace of such intercourse now? I think we do. I believe that every true child of God enjoys this gift of the Spirit, though he may not know it by that name. I can but hint at the class of facts to which I allude.

How many thoughts and feelings and purposes come into our minds, of whose origin we are not able to give the slightest account! We feel impulses, leadings. We feel drawn to certain things, and repelled from certain other things. We feel moved to speak, or we hear a whisper from within that we had better keep silence. The thought, the word, the act, is not that which we had premeditated and reasoned out, but something better than our own.

We are conscious of strange yearnings, too, which fill and move us. Who ever did right, without first feeling something within strongly drawing him toward it? Who ever did wrong, without feeling more or less strongly an inward shrinking from the evil? But you say that is only conscience. Ah! but what is conscience? Do we suppose it is the result of certain machinery which God has set up within man, and then left it to run its course? Do not deceive yourselves with names. What we call conscience is the voice of God in the soul. What are these vague, strange yearnings, which we all sometimes feel, but the threads, by which, without our knowing it, the Father is trying to lead his children aright?

Socrates, the purest, the best, the greatest philosopher of all heathen antiquity, in his defence before the tribunal which condemned him to death, speaks strange words about the guardian spirit which he felt had always directed his course in life. "I am moved," he says, "by a certain divine and spiritual influence; it began with me in childhood, being a kind of voice. This wonted prophetic voice of my guardian deity, on every former occasion, even in the most trifling affairs, opposed me, if I was about to do any thing wrong." He followed this guidance implicitly, not knowing whence it came. A spirit is striving with us too, trying to lead us; we feel it, as much as he did. Do we know what spirit it is? The heathen called it his guardian deity: we Christians know that it is the Spirit of God.

In the first age of Christianity, in addition to this general form of which we have spoken, the gifts of the Spirit took also a more limited application. Jesus promises, that, in the hour when his disciples are brought before magistrates and kings for his sake, it shall be given them what they shall speak; that he will give them an utterance and wisdom which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. Is there not a gift of the Spirit still surviving, less in degree, but yet akin to this early gift of utterance? Do you remember, in the introduction to

the great epic of modern times, the prayer for this very gift?

> "And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me; for thou know'st.
> What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That, to the height of this great argument,
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

Milton was not the man to use in poetic imagery, with vain form, such words as these. It was his prayer for guidance and direction from the Spirit of all truth; a prayer for something which he felt was a real need.

Nor is this a rare experience. Some years ago, I listened to a conversation on this subject between two of the most gifted pulpit orators of our country, personally known to many of you, in which they agreed in a similar experience. They said that the thoughts in their sermons which made the deepest impression on those who heard them, and which did the most good, were not theirs. They could not account for them; they had not reasoned them out; all they knew about them was, that perhaps at the moment they flashed into their minds, and they merely spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. And they asked whether the object of education and discipline was not this: to strengthen the

mind, to purify the heart, to consecrate the will, and thus fit one to be a worthy instrument through which the Holy Spirit should have utterance. Now, is not this strange influence, whose guidance Socrates tried to follow; for which Milton prayed to help him in his great work; which every one, who speaks or writes earnestly, must needs feel; and those inexplicable yearnings which we all have, leading us to good and away from evil: is it not the Holy Spirit striving with our spirits?

We know not what to make of these passages of our own experience, taken alone; we know not what to make of those mysterious words of the New Testament about the Holy Spirit, if we take them alone. Do they not fit into each other, and is not each the other's interpreter? Do not these obscure passages of the Scripture give to these inexplicable passages of the deepest human experience their Christian name, when they call them the influence of God's Spirit? We rejoice, then, to believe, that the Creator, God, is the Father also, continually renewing that which at first he gave; that he has not separated a little fragment from himself, and left it alone; but that the little spark of celestial fire is still kept alive from the great source, that the branch still draws its strength from the parent stock, that the little bay is refreshed by the tides which flow in and out from the boundless ocean.

But, if this be the birthright of the human soul, how is it that to many these divine influences come so seldom, and are felt so feebly, that they can hardly be recognized? It is because there are conditions to the reception of this, as of all God's best gifts; conditions, not on God's side, but on our side. The gift is ready for us, whenever we will take it. There is a place waiting for God in every human heart; a holy of holies, perchance not yet consecrated. The man must dedicate this temple, and then the Lord will enter and dwell there.

What are these conditions? We can only name them. One is obedience. If we would feel strongly the divine influences, we must follow them. The Bible speaks of "quenching the Spirit." We do quench the Spirit, whenever we refuse to follow its leading and to give ourselves up to its guidance. We can shut our hearts to it, and then we no longer receive it. We must have the spirit of entire consecration to the will of God. A selfish purpose confuses our hearing. The jargon of worldly aims makes us deaf to the gentle whispers of the Holy Ghost. Jesus refers to this, when he says of himself, "My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." He could listen without distraction to the voice from above; and he mingled not its utterance with that of passion, desire, and selfishness. In the

proportion in which we have this same spirit, and pray to God sincerely for it, will come to us, clear and distinct, the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Does not light come to us from this view upon that perplexing question of theology, the nature of inspiration? If God thus deals with and speaks through our spirits, what higher inspiration can be possible than this, and are not we inspired? I think we are, in the degree in which we have this influence. In the degree: that is the important point. It is said of Jesus, that the Spirit was given to him without measure. God dwelt in him fully. His whole nature was the temple of the Holy Ghost; and so thoroughly was his will conformed to God's will, that he and the Father were one. So Jesus spoke perfectly God's thoughts and uttered God's truth, because the Holy Spirit without measure dwelt in him. Is there not in this very expression "without measure," as applied to Jesus, an implication that the same spirit in some slight measure abides in men? Christians, we would say it reverently, have some sparks of that same Holy Spirit which filled the Saviour. Our inspiration is dim, incomplete, partial; we see as through a glass darkly. His inspiration was full, complete, perfect. God was in him fully; and so the words which he spoke were not his own, but the Father's who sent him. All sight of heavenly things is not cut off from us; but we look at them, as the

child through his piece of smoked glass looks at the sun. He sees the form of it; but it is confused, dim, uncertain. These things become clear, as we become pure and holy, obedient and self-sacrificing. Yet our best insight is still obscure. But he in whom dwelt the fulness of the Spirit looked, as through the great object-glass, undimmed by earthly mists, undistorted by human passion; nay, he saw the Father face to face. The Father had come and taken up his abode with him. We can implicitly trust in him, when he takes the things of God and declares them to us.

But does not this influence from above trench upon human freedom? There is indeed a mysterious border-ground between the finite and the infinite. The mysteries of fate and freedom and necessity lie hidden there, in the dark. Human wisdom cannot answer all the hard questions which may be asked concerning them. But the answer here is not difficult. The striving of the Holy Spirit is influence, not compulsion. The Christian father is continually exerting a good influence upon his child; perhaps, without saying a word, he is trying to lead him to God, to strengthen him in virtue. The child follows this parental leading sometimes, and resists it sometimes; and he is as free in following as in resisting it. So we freely yield to or neglect the influences of the Heavenly Father.

And this is the fearful part of it: we are free, we can grieve away and quench the Holy Spirit, and resist the Divine leading.

What momentous importance this adds to our acts of sin and to our victories over evil! They take hold of "the powers of the world to come." Temptation assails a man. For the time, he is the central object in the universe. Heaven is tenderly bending over him; unseen cords from above are drawing him to the right. The Father himself is whispering to his soul words of courage and strength. Such is the importance of each single contest you wage with sin. You have unseen allies; heaven itself pauses, to know whether it be for you victory or ruin.

And we know that God is not alone the Creator, providing for his offspring; but indeed a Father, dealing with the hearts, as well as protecting the bodies, of his children. What earthly father would think that he performed his parental duty, if he merely fed and clothed and protected his child? Who would not seek also to influence him to good, to use this subtle power by which soul speaks to soul? God thus speaks to us, soul to soul. How much comfort there is in the belief in a special Providence, which numbers every hair of our heads, which directs every event, which sends sickness and health, prosperity and trial, life and death, all in infinite and loving wisdom! How it gives us peace in the

changes and chances of this mortal life! The Holy Spirit is the special Providence of the soul. It stands in a nearer and tenderer relation to us than the other. Who would not follow, when he knows that it is God who leads the way? Who would not obey, when he feels that that little whisper in his soul is the Father's voice to his child? Thus "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God; and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."

XIV.

LESSONS OF THE FLOWERS.

Matt. vi. 28: "CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD."

IT was in the summer, when Jesus, having returned from an extensive preaching tour to his home at Capernaum, went up into one of the high hills which close in on every side the sea of Galilee, to speak to the multitude of the kingdom of God, which it was his mission to proclaim. There he was on the grassy slope of the mountain; the multitude just below eagerly listening to his words; Capernaum at a little distance on one side; and, to the south, the blue waters of the lake glistening in the morning sunlight. It was no time for studied expressions or abstract discussions. Nature was all about them, speaking with the thousand-tongued beauties of the Galilean landscape. The birds were singing their hymns in the woods; the flowers were blooming on the hillside; the trees were whispering their morning anthem of praise; and now and then might be heard the low murmur of the multitude, as the Teacher unfolded to them the truths he had learned of God, and spoke of deeper things than they had ever before conceived.

In no set or formal phrase did he speak to them, but as one would talk to his friends, out of the fulness of his heart; and yet there was a majesty in his mien, and a dignity in his manner, which made them almost think that Elijah or one of the old prophets had come back to the chosen people. Though his instructions were weightier than any which ever before had been intrusted to human words, yet these words were simple and plain, as it is always fitting that the grandest thoughts should be uttered. He spoke from the occasion, and drew his illustrations from what was passing about him. When he would teach his hearers of the constant care of God, he pointed to some birds which were just flying above them. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And a similar lesson of trust he drew from the lilies at his feet. "Consider them, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

It is indeed remarkable how little of abstract and barren discussion there is in the words of Christ. He spoke from beneath the shade of gardens and in vineyards, on the hillside and by the wayside; and he scorned not to make a little fisher's boat on the Sea of Galilee his pulpit.

Wherever there were human souls open to hear the gospel, there was the chosen time and place for him to declare it. And he spoke of that which was about them, that thereby he might lead their thoughts to the deepest truth. In almost every conversation, he calls the attention of his disciples to the phenomena of nature, giving them a spiritual interpretation. How he makes all things speak of God and the great truths of his religion! How he gives to the fields and the trees and the flowers a voice to tell of the Creator and his love! We should accustom ourselves thus to look at nature; and we shall find our communion with it to be a fountain of religious thought and of fresher life. We should teach our children thus to search out its hidden meanings, that they may have the strength which comes from its pure influences. Why should we not be willing sometimes to leave our books, and let the earth preach to us of the Infinite? The birds are still singing in our foliage, as in that which clothed the hills of Palestine; and though they sow not, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. The lilies to-day are blooming on yonder summits; and though they neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon, in all his glory, is not arrayed like one of them. It is now with us the season of flowers. We would let them preach to us this morning, while we only listen and interpret their words.

The first head of their sermon is of God's goodness. They declare that unbounded love which encloses every work of the Creator's hand. Why were there any such things as flowers? Why has he arrayed them in so much beauty? Surely, the world might have been made fitted for its uses, without all this lavish expenditure. The seed might mature without this display, and be just as nutritious and useful to man. The corn might grow and ripen, without feasting the eye on its fields of luxuriant green and tasselled spires. And there are many plants whose only use seems to be to bloom. Neither man nor beast can eat their fruit; and yet they perpetuate their life, and with every spring start up and grow and blossom in fresh beauty. Why is all this? It can only be God's benevolent provision for his children. He has intended, not only that they should live, but that they should be happy. He has planted in us the love for the beautiful; and he has fitted external nature, not only to supply our outward, material wants, but also to minister to our deeper yearnings. This shows us that we were never designed to be mere workers, drudges. The Almighty is more liberal to his children than to require that. We were made to enjoy, as well as to do. The flowers are nature's play; the fruits are her work. We have also our play, as well as our work.

And how lavish the Creator has been of his

adornments! With what admirable and abundant garniture has he arrayed this world in which we live! You cannot step your foot from your door, but it treads upon some little flower, which, if you examine, you will find to be a marvel of beauty, the like of which no human skill could produce. The dryest and dustiest roadside is clothed with its vesture of green, and variegated with fresh bloom. The wilderness itself blossoms like the rose. In the most busy street of the city, if you leave a little spot untrodden, the grass and flowers will spring up between the stones, and claim nature's right to the ground beneath. From the rocks piled up by some ancient deluge, or dropped from some primeval glacier as it swept along the floods, just below the summit of Mount Washington, peers forth the little flower, to make even those crags beautiful. And go into the province of the unseen, and unclose its mysteries with your glass, and beauty appears everywhere before you. Magnify an object a million times, and yet you can see no flaw in it: it is still beautiful and harmonious in every part. What could speak more clearly of God's superabundant kindness than these same flowers, which he has scattered so lavishly in our path?

And they discourse, again, of God's impartial care over all the things which he has made. He created the smallest lichen, which nestles in the

cleft of the barren rock, as truly as he did the mountain range which divides a continent. And he cares for one as for the other. His love knows not the distinction of great and small, but is universal over all his works. He forgets not to distil its fragrance into the little May-flower, when its season for blooming comes, any more than he neglects to hold up the solar system by his mighty hand. He is never weary of blessing. And what is the lesson for us? Does any one of you feel that he is so humble that God has forgotten him? that his care is for the rich, the powerful, the great, and that no thought of the Infinite can be spared for him? Let him go out by the wayside, and the little violet will whisper the lesson of modest faith, which he needs to learn. Yes: the love which sustains alike the flowers and the stars can be no respecter of persons.

The flowers also say to us a few words on cheerfulness. Nature is said to smile in the landscape, in the meadows of waving grass, and in the rustling verdure of the trees; but in the flowers she laughs outright. We were made, too, to laugh sometimes, and to rejoice heartily in the good things given to us. I believe, if God had made man to be usually a sad and melancholy being, that he would have created no flowers to mock his grief with their gayety. The world without us was designed to be a type

of the world within us. Whoever saw a black flower? In nature we find sometimes the pensive and the sad, but never the despairing. Most of her days are not even pensive, but filled to the full with light and joy. All is hopeful and happy. The very clover is jubilant with joy. There seems a perfect ecstasy of delight exhaled from the blooming garden. And no man, however complaining and fatigued, can come under these influences, without being made the happier for it.

Finally, the flowers preach to us still the same sermon which Jesus interpreted from those lilies of Galilee to the wondering multitude. It is an exhortation to trust ever in God; to trust in misfortune and trial, to trust in sickness and death. He cares for the grass of the field, which lasts but for its day; and will he not care for his own children? And yet there are times when it almost seems as if the flowers were forgotten. What must the violet have thought, if it could think, when the harsh winds of last autumn blew upon it? The glory of its flower passed away, and left only a withered stalk. The leaves grew sere and yellow, and one by one dropped off, and were blown away by the October winds. Quickly the snows covered it; and what was left of all its beauty and vigor? Would it not, when all these apparently sad changes were befalling it, almost begin to doubt the care of

God, and think that the beneficent Father had deserted it? But God did watch over it, though the winds blew harshly, and the ground froze around its tender roots. The resurrection of the spring-time surely came; and again the spirit of God has breathed upon it, and made it bloom forth in new beauty.

And so to us, when the gathering frosts of age have whitened the hair, when the strength has decayed, and one by one the green leaves of youth have grown sere, shall then a doubt of God's goodness come up to darken our remaining days, and shall we fear to trust ourselves to him through the winter of death, which we see approaching? To us, also, there will be a spring-time: we shall rise again, and bloom with a fairer life. If ever you feel desponding, and doubt of what is in store for you, wander into the gardens and over the hills, and in each joyous flower hear a preacher of immortality.

Flowers should stand by the bedside of the sick, gently whispering to the sufferer of the tender love of a Father in heaven. They carry a lesson of peace and a benediction with them. And they are the fitting emblems with which to surround him who has passed through life's great change. Not with cypress-trees should we shade our graveyards: they teach too much of gloom and despair, rather than the trusting Christian faith, which gives the victory over

death. Our cemeteries should be gardens, like that in which was the rock-hewn tomb from which the Saviour rose. We should place garlands upon our dead, the letters in which God has written his love upon his works, the emblems of our Christian faith in a blessed resurrection.

XV.

MONUMENTS.

Gen. xxxv. 20: "And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."

WE would not have those we love forgotten; we wish to keep their memory fresh and green; we would have them remembered in the place where they once lived and acted; and we would have their names cherished. It was with this desire that Jacob set up the pillar upon Rachel's grave; it is with this feeling that our graveyard is whitened with so many monuments to the loved and lost. Are they not all inscribed, "In memory of"?

And yet I know not that these are the monuments which to us best keep them in memory. Are there not associations yet more tender with the chair in which they used to sit in the family circle, which now is empty; with the books which they used to read, perchance the well-worn Bible; or even with the playthings of the child too early lost? And we, perhaps, may rear for them in the community monuments better than those of marble: some public benefit given in their name; the common, the fountain, the library, the school, which, as men shall enjoy these, will call them to

mind; some gift to the church, which, in the Sunday school, in the Sabbath worship, or in the commemorative feast, will remind the worshippers of those who once worshipped in those same courts, but now have passed on to the higher service. A beautiful and touching custom it is, in one of our sisterhood of churches, thus to consecrate the Easter Sunday to the memory of the departed. The church is trimmed with flowers, sent by friends as memorials of those who have passed from their homes; and the very air is made fragrant, not alone with thoughts of the life immortal, but of those dear ones who live it now.

As we go back, after long absence, to the home of our childhood, we are pleased to find that we are not wholly forgotten there; that some remain still to give us the friendly greeting. And especially does it rejoice us, if we find that some good work of ours still stands. We like to look at the tree we planted, which now shades the traveller in the hot summer; at the ground we used to till, the institution we helped to establish, the Sabbath school where we taught or learned, the old church where we used to worship. We do not wish to feel that all those years of life have passed and left no record. So, I think, it will be with us, as we look back from another world upon this scene of our former labors and struggles and joys.

We would leave some memorial, some record, behind us. A desire for a good name after death is implanted in our nature. How many heroic acts have been inspired by the love of fame! How many noble words have been uttered to the great audience of future ages! And those who care not for fame as such, yet wish their memories to be fragrant with gratitude and affection, after their bodies rest beneath the sod. We do not expect to live in the page of history; but who of us does not wish to be remembered in the world, after he has left it?

But how may we be remembered? What enduring monument can we rear for ourselves? Stone is not durable enough. Last Sabbath, I wandered alone in one of the oldest graveyards of the city, where, I suppose, the stones bear the names of men once great in the little village of Boston, but now passed for ever from the memory of men. Many of the inscriptions were almost illegible, only able perchance to keep the date safe from the tooth of time. Some one died in 1675: this was all that we might know. And of the most showy monuments, dedicated to the memory of some magnate of the early day, the stone itself was crumbling to pieces. Alas, the vanity of human greatness! As empty and worthless, though on a still greater scale, was that structure by which the monarch wished to keep the memory of himself and of his race

ever fresh to the admiring thoughts of men. And so he piled block upon block, and kept thousands of slaves at work, to build a worthy burial-place. And, when he died, he was laid within its massive chambers. It stands still, a stupendous monument to some man's folly, we know not whose. The builder's name, and that of his race, what he did and who he was, have all perished; and his very bones are dragged from their resting-place, to grace the gallery of one of our modern museums. And this is monumental fame! A monument will never keep a man in remembrance, unless he has done something which would make him remembered without it.

Can we trust to wealth to keep us from being forgotten? The marble lasts longer than that. It requires but a few years to scatter the largest fortunes. They rarely continue in the same family for three successive generations. The children spend what the father by industry and energy earned, and the grandson of the millionnaire often lies in the debtor's prison.

Can we trust our memory to relationship? The bond of kindred grows weak, as it grows long. And the nearest ties of blood, if they be nothing more, may be but chains of ice. Even in our own families, our memory will only be so far cherished as it deserves to be cherished. Children do not love their father, merely because he is their father; nor do they so tenderly regard

his memory, merely because they are his heirs. They do not remember him with any more affection because he leaves a rich inheritance; perhaps they may recall him even with less. I have never known a son even to mention with gratitude the money he received from his father's estate. I have known many who have cherished their father's name with honor and reverence, because of his faithful discharge of parental duty, his wise instructions, his firm and gentle guidance into the path of virtue. Everywhere, in the community and in the family as well, there is one single price we must pay for remembrance. We must deserve it. We must earn it by worthy acts, by kindly sympathies, by unselfish devotion, by works of charity and of love. The sum of what we would say is this, that our memory must be kept alive, not by what others may do for us after we are dead, but by what we do for ourselves while we yet live. If a man, while he lives, does not build his own monument, no pomp of sculptured marble will save him from being forgotten.

We desire to erect our own monuments. We inscribe our name on stone, because that lasts, and will carry the inscribed name through a century. There is material better yet for such a use. If we link our names with something which men use or enjoy or revere, that will carry them yet farther into the distant future. More

than two hundred years ago, a country minister gave his little property to establish what was then scarcely more than a high school for this infant Commonwealth. I know not that he was otherwise distinguished; but that act of wise liberality has held him and will keep him long in grateful remembrance. He has joined his name indissolubly with that which men will not let die, because they need it. Royal governors, prime ministers even, have lived their brief life, and been forgotten; but this name remains. Could he have built for himself a better monument, that plain country minister, John Harvard?

Let me mention an instance more recent. A benevolent lady, who was always doing good in some way, purchased a beautiful grove in the country village in which she lived, and gave it to the town, to be kept always open for public pleasure and enjoyment. It bears her name now; and will it not last there longer even than if cut into the solid granite of those New Hampshire hills? A town does not forget its benefactors. What better monument can one rear to keep his memory fresh in that community in which he moves, than the school for substantial benefit called by his name, the library, the institution for public instruction, the reading-room, the play-ground, the fountain, something which will be doing good and giving pleasure to other

generations? I count these cheap monuments, all of them. Long after one has passed away, they will stand, nor will men suffer them to fall into decay.

But there is one drawback here: there are comparatively few who are able to build such memorials for themselves. And yet we do not wish to be forgotten. My friends, I think that the best, the most lasting memorial is open to us all. He is a benefactor, and deserves and receives men's gratitude, who ministers to their outward wants, who adds to their comfort, who relieves their pain. But there is a greater benefit than this which may be conferred upon them. A higher claim for gratitude and remembrance has he who leads a sinner from the error of his way, who confirms in virtue one who is wavering, who guides even a little child into the way of life, who turns the sorrowing to Him who can heal their grief. Who of us may not do something of this work for his fellow-men? Who may not thus write his name on the living, yes, ever-living tables of human hearts? And then, as we pass from earth, we leave tears and grateful memories behind us, and find our names not unknown in the goodly land whither we go. Yes, when we build such monuments, they are not for this world alone. We have written on human souls our inscription of faith and purity and trust; and when they pass on, perchance

before us, they carry the record with them, safely out of these scenes which pass away, into the world eternal. Remembered in heaven! What memory of earth can compare with that? One soul saved, turned away from its folly and its sin, brought to know the dear love of the Father above, led to the Saviour's feet! Worth a whole life's work is this; and he who has done it has reared a living memorial of himself which shall never perish.

It is to such a benefactor that our grateful remembrance is due to-day. We remember him who has guided us to the heavenly Father, who has helped us in weakness and comforted us in sorrow, who has laid down his life for us. And he remembers us, if we give of his truth to the ignorant, of his strength to the weak, if we try to lead his erring brothers into the right path. As we do our little part of his work, we share his remembrance and enter into his joy.

XVI.

GREAT MEN.

Judges ii. 7: "AND THE PEOPLE SERVED THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF JOSHUA, AND ALL THE DAYS OF THE ELDERS THAT OUTLIVED JOSHUA, WHO HAD SEEN ALL THE GREAT WORKS OF THE LORD THAT HE DID FOR ISRAEL."

THE persons with whom we associate, though we may not desire or even know it, have a great deal to do with the formation of our characters. Insensibly, we become like them. It is so even when we resist and despise the influence which is thus moulding us. On this account, it is unsafe, no matter how strong our principles may be, to have much to do with the vicious and corrupt, except for the single purpose of making them better; and even then we must be on our guard. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith." How much stronger this influence must be from those whom we admire and honor! Almost unconsciously, we make them our models, and more or less bend our own characters into their likeness. What we respect and love we desire to make our own; for who does not desire that others should respect and love him? As one who intends to be an architect studies the admirable works of ancient

art, that more truly he may express the beautiful ideal in his own soul; studies them, not that he may be a servile imitator, but that he may catch somewhat of their spirit: so in that nobler architecture, character-building, consciously or unconsciously we have our models, our ideals, our types of manhood.

Say what we please of its folly, we are all by nature hero-worshippers. This shows itself even in children. The boy's hero is his father. He is the ideal of manliness, the personification of virtue and strength. And the nearer the boy can be like his father, the more manly does he feel that he is growing. Even his vices and faults have a captivating air about them. Does the parent often give way to his temper, and fly into a passion? The child must needs follow the example. Does the father swear or drink? Though he thinks it may not be quite right, the boy must do the same, it is so very manly; and he very probably betters the instruction. It would be ludicrous, if it were not so alarming, to see our little faults and peculiarities and failings thus represented to us in miniature. Whether we will accept it or not, the responsibility of our example rests upon us. We must do what we want our children to do, and be what we want them to be.

Nations are pre-eminently hero-worshippers; and that mysterious thing, national character,

depends much on the character of the objects of popular veneration. The nation not only honors, but follows, its models. You can determine its type of character from the Valhalla of its heroes, the calendar of its saints, and the roll of honor of its great men. I think, my friends, that especially on this day, the birthday of one of the noblest of Americans, we ought to be devoutly thankful to God, that he has made the fountain of our national life so pure, and our greatest men so worthy, not alone of honor, but of imitation. It sometimes seems as if nations had an individual life and character of their own, clearly marked at their beginning, and showing itself throughout their history. It may partly be owing to this, that every people venerates and imitates its forefathers. To take a single instance: ancient Rome, if we may trust their traditions, was founded by a band of freebooters, and their king was a murderer of his twin brother. And, throughout their history, they were true to the traditions of their race; freebooters still, when kingdoms were the prize for which they fought, and the wealth of empires the booty; till that other prophecy was fulfilled, and the streets of Rome were red with Roman blood. Have we not reason to be grateful for the source from which we sprung? Our early history, and the characters of our fathers, are a precious inheritance.

In some quarters, at this time, we read dispar-

aging words of the Puritans. I know not that they were favorites with certain classes in their own day. Their unbending morality was the jest of the libertines of that profligate and licentious age. Their love of liberty in church and state was the sum of abominations to the time-serving courtiers and fawning prelates of Charles the First. They won no honor from those whose praise would make the face of an honest man flush with shame. They were at least honored by the hatred of those whose blame was the highest praise. Nor is it a wonder, that the descendants of those gay cavaliers, who went down, rank after rank, under the onset of Cromwell's pikemen on the bloody field of Naseby, have no great love for the Puritan stock. Let them, and such as them, disparage it, if they please: perhaps they have reason. But blistered be the tongue of the son of New England who shall dare to say aught against the Puritans! From nobler stock no nation ever sprung; with holier purpose no state was ever founded. In the double interest of religion and liberty they established this Commonwealth; and to her early consecration may she prove true, to the end of time!

In the same manner, the great intellect of a nation, he whose name is a household word by every fireside, must have a strong formative influence upon the nation's character. We can see

in the German life and intellect to-day the influence of their great master-mind, and not always for good. How strong this influence is, after its kind! Alas that great men are not always good men! Too often the heroes of intellect are not full-formed, symmetrical persons. Like the image of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, the head is of fine gold, but the feet are of poor clay. Such men are warnings rather than models, often justifying Pope's bitter line upon Lord Bacon, "wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind." What is the kingly name in our literary calendar? We can hardly find it on this side of the ocean; but yet it is ours still. Is it not John Milton, the copatriot and the fellow-believer of our Pilgrim Fathers; Milton, republican in politics, Protestant in theology, and Christian in life? Could we select from the annals of literature a nobler name? Could we choose a purer spirit to give the tone to a nation's literature?

But who is pre-eminently our national hero, the patron saint, if we may so speak, of America? In other lands, almost every week is marked by the festival of some saint. The twenty-second of February is the only saint's-day which we think we have time to keep. Our calendar bears one glorious, one canonized name, the name of Washington. Before this generation has passed away, another name may be emblazoned there; we know not whose, but may it be as worthy!

What an effect the character of their hero has had upon the character of the French people! Every boy grows up after the Napoleonic model; it is that type of greatness which dazzles his youthful imagination; it is that style of success at which in miniature he aims. In greater or less degree, this must inevitably be the case. The character of the great hero stamps its image upon his nation.

Can we be too thankful that God sent no Napoleon to be our providential leader, and that we have before us the example of such a complete and symmetrical manhood for our imitation? In these troublous times, so similar to those in which he moved, we cannot go far astray, if we take him for our guide. That example we may safely follow; and let this be the touchstone by which to try our course: Would Washington, the pure and disinterested patriot, act as I am acting in this great crisis of our country's fate?

We may be dazzled by the lustre of great exploits and by the brilliancy of genius; but the true test of greatness and heroism is this: can we safely imitate it? He is not worthy of honor whom we cannot safely follow. It is not safe to admire him whom we would not take as our model; for, against our will even, he is more or less our model whom we admire. The character of that great man is a worthy object of venera-

tion, which will bear being multiplied in miniature indefinitely, so that it would be well if there were a whole nation after the pattern of such heroes. What would be the condition of a country whose citizens were all Napoleons? Two in a century are as many as the world can well bear. But would that we had to-day a nation of Washingtons! Not a doubt or fear would then darken our future. We want no Napoleon; but, if we had one Washington, it would be enough to save the nation. May God send us such a one in his own good time!

But there he stands, our national hero, the example of complete and rounded manhood! Strange combination! The great general, the incorruptible patriot, the humble Christian, all in one. He who could receive men's homage without being seduced by it, and wield power almost despotic without abusing it. Let his name stand at the head; "a name," as Burke said of Lord Chatham, "illustrious and venerable to the nations; a name which makes the name of this country respectable all over the world." Fortunate are we, then, in our national heroes, our Puritan ancestors, our Milton, and our Washington; good models all, to build a nation's life upon. A nation with such an origin and such heroes, if it be true to itself, is marked out for great things in God's providence, and for a noble destiny.

And yet, my friends, we cannot follow even these splendid examples implicitly and unreservedly. The best character is not faultless; the highest human attainment is not free from imperfection. We must judge them by the standard by which they judged themselves, and follow them only so far as they were true to that. Does not this hero-worship to which men are so prone; this canonizing of saints; this choosing for ourselves, from among the great and good, models of character: does it not declare to us, almost as a necessity of human nature, that there should be one faultless model? Do not these vague yearnings of humanity point to the one perfect example, and find their full and complete satisfaction in him? We must turn from these lives, noble indeed, yet not always faultless, to Him whom our forefathers, our Milton, our great Washington, themselves humble disciples, tried at a distance to resemble. We must follow them only so far as they followed their Master and our Master, and imitate their spirit only as they partook of his. Let us be grateful that these leaders of our race were themselves so faithful followers of the Lord, in meekness and humility devoting themselves to him and to God's work. And, while we honor them as they most justly deserve, let us lay hold of that help which they found so strong, and give ourselves to that Lord in whose name they won their triumphs and did their noble work.

XVII.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

Isa. li. 1: "LOOK UNTO THE ROCK WHENCE YE ARE HEWN."

THE twenty-second of December should be kept as a day of thanksgiving among us to all generations; for on this cold and snowy December day, two hundred and forty-one years ago, were laid the foundations of our great, free, and Christian commonwealth; and the precious leaven of liberty and faith was scattered here, which yet shall leaven a continent. Let us think of the Pilgrims to-day; and our thoughts will be thoughts of gratitude, that they were *who* they were, that they were *what* they were, and that God so wonderfully trained and educated them for their great work.

They were Englishmen: let us be grateful for that. With all the occasional heart-burnings and rivalries, in spite of all the hard blows we have given and taken, we are yet proud of our lineage. We scold about our cousins across the water, and they about us; perhaps we are too much alike to get along together without some jarring: and yet, under it all, there is a good hearty respect between the two nations.

Mother and daughter are proud of each other, even when they talk loudest and strike hardest. And so we are thankful that those noble men, whom God led here, were of English race. The Spaniards, more than half a century before, had planted a colony on the shores of Florida; the French had established their settlement on the river St. Lawrence; the Dutch had already occupied, with their trading settlement, Manhattan, at the mouth of the Hudson River. But the sovereignty of this great continent was not for Frenchman nor Spaniard nor Hollander. God had reserved to a little band of Englishmen, Englishmen too of whom England was not worthy, Englishmen whom England's sovereign had driven into exile, the glory of becoming the founders of the great state that was to be.

God's hand is visible, too, in the time when the Pilgrims were chosen for their work. It was a period of great national energy and enterprise. Under her great queen, England had humbled the power of Spain, and had just taken for herself the front rank among the nations. It was a time of strong religious life. The Reformation in England, which had begun merely by the exchange of Pope Leo X. for Pope Henry VIII., was now ripening its fruits. It was the time of the Covenanters in Scotland, of the Puritans and Independents in England. Religion was emancipating herself on every side from

the chains she had so long worn, and was quickened with a new life. It was an age, too, of intellectual awakening. Our fathers were Englishmen of the time of Lord Bacon and Shakspeare and Milton. It was an age, also, when the new leaven of political liberty was strongly working among the people; the spirit was already gathering strength which was soon to culminate in the revolution of 1642. They were Englishmen of the times of Hampden and Cromwell. The old English stock was never more healthy and full of life than just at the time when this vigorous scion was broken from it, and planted in this new soil. Yes: Englishmen of the Englishmen, and Protestants of the Protestants, were those sturdy Pilgrims.

And what a noble training God gave to these chosen men! They were tried by persecution at home. They were taught the worth of religion by being obliged to make sacrifices for it; and they knew the full value of religous freedom, because they had been deprived of it. Then God led them to Holland, exiles for conscience' sake. For eleven years, they lived at Leyden; but, though kindly received, they never felt fully at home in Holland. The manners and the language of the country never became natural to them; they felt that they were Englishmen still: and yet those years of exile were an important part of their providential discipline. They

were spent industriously. Most of the men had been used at home to agricultural pursuits; here they were obliged to support themselves by mechanical trades. Those eleven years were spent religiously. By the tie of a common faith and of common sufferings, the English exiles were bound closely together. And when they determined to emigrate to America, and sent their request for a charter, in true democratic spirit, signed by the greater part of the congregation, these were the words which accompanied it, written by their ministers, Robinson and Brewster: "We are well weaned," they say, "from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. The people are industrious and frugal. We are knit together as a body, in a most sacred covenant of the Lord; of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves straitly tied to all care of each other's good and of the whole. It is not with us as with men whom small things can discourage." Those eleven years had not been in vain.

After long delay and the absolute refusal of any countenance from the king, they embarked under a charter from a private company. They sailed from Southampton in two ships; but not yet were they thoroughly winnowed. The new seed must be of the finest of the wheat. The Speedwell was found to need repairs, and was

pretended to be unseaworthy. They returned to Plymouth; and all whose courage failed, all who were disaffected, were allowed to abandon the enterprise. They sailed again in a single ship, a hundred and one souls, on the sixth day of September, 1620. Good men and true they were; men who had known what it was to labor, and to suffer too; men who feared God, who loved liberty better than life, who still cherished affection for their native land, though she had persecuted and driven them away: it was "dear England" still.

They were not commercial adventurers, attracted by the insane love of gain, which led so many in that age to follow Cortez and Pizzaro to the land of gold; but they went with their wives and children to find a home where they could live in peace, and worship God after the dictates of their own consciences. They were all frugal and industrious, used to toil and expecting hard work in their new life; not like that ship-load which, thirteen years before, had disembarked to form the first settlement in Virginia, which on the passenger list numbered fifty "gentlemen" and eight "laborers." They were all from that great middle class which forms the strength of any nation; not like those who settled the fairer lands on the Chesapeake, who were partly the younger sons of titled families, the dissolute heirs of great names, and partly

the convicts sent out from the prisons of the mother country to do the work as laborers of the new State. Yes: a noble band of men and women, worthy to found a nation, were the Mayflower's company. All England had been sifted for those hundred souls.

But whither were they bound? Their charter said, to the "northern parts of Virginia." They had selected for themselves the mouth of the Hudson River; but, through the incompetence or wilful treachery of their captain, the first land on the new continent which they reached was Cape Cod, and they anchored in the harbor of Provincetown. Can we not discern the hand of Providence, which turned them from their purpose, and fixed their settlement on the barren shore of Massachusetts? Can we imagine what would have been the result, had they settled in the warm climate and on the fertile soil of Virginia, or had they founded the great metropolis which now occupies Manhattan Island? God had something harder, but better, in store for them.

They were to land on a soil only moderately productive, that they and their children might learn the sturdy virtues of industry, frugality, and thrift. Its cold climate and its rugged coast would offer little temptation to the needy adventurers, to the soldiers of fortune, to the ambitious and the profligate. The asylum of freedom

would be safe from such intermeddling, till the good tree whose leaves were to be for the healing of the nations had struck so deep that it could not be uprooted. They were to land here by themselves, five hundred miles from that other civilization in Virginia and from the French colony at Port Royal. Here their institutions, safe from all intrusion and interference, could be established and have their appropriate work. In the beginning, their very poverty and disadvantages were their strength and safety. Nor did they have to fear the hostilities of the Indians. The neighborhood of Plymouth, a few years before, had been desolated by a pestilence; so that hardly any of the original inhabitants survived. And there the first body of the Pilgrims landed, two hundred and forty-one years ago this day.* It is worth while to notice that it was on Monday; they having delayed one day, in spite of their pressing need, because they would keep sacred, even in that emergency, the Sabbath.

Imagine them landing on this coast on the twenty-second of December, with no civilized neighbors for hundreds of miles, houseless, poorly provisioned! Was not the prospect enough to make the heart of the bravest quail? And yet this was the brightest day of that long, dreary winter. In a few days, they erected such shelter as they could, in the intervals between

* Preached Dec. 22, 1861.

the sleet and the snow-storms; and there they endured the privations and the dangers of the winter. What that winter was, we may know from the fact, that of the whole body of men, forty-one in number, who signed that compact for government in the harbor of Provincetown on November twenty-first, twenty-four died before the end of the next March; and of the whole company, the one hundred and one men, women, and children who landed, half were laid to rest together on that little slope just above the sea; and the earth was smoothed over the new-made graves, that the Indians might not count their loss. Yet none of those seventeen men, with women and children who remained, faltered in their purpose. They sent back the Mayflower, and returned to their work. They had put their hands to the plough, and they would not turn back. They had God's work before them, and they felt that they must do it.

Would you see the result of their unfaltering courage, their true-hearted Christian purpose? Look about you. In that dreary winter was laid in weakness and in pain, and consecrated by the last sacrifice which men can make to the truth, the corner-stone of our great republic. That was God's purpose, which, unknowing, they had fulfilled. And indeed, if there is any one thing which strikes us in the history of the Pilgrims, it is the clear way in which we can

trace out the leadings of Providence in regard to them. There seems, as we look back upon it, an Almighty hand outstretched to direct their way. As the Israelites were led across the sea and through the wilderness to the "promised land," so they came to found this new England, the England that they loved, without its oppressions, without its persecutions; a new England of civil and religious liberty.

It was a hard school in which they were trained for their work, as men view it. They were tried by persecution, by exile, by poverty, by sacrifice, by loss; but it was that they might be a "peculiar people," worthy to found a noble state. Has God ceased thus to deal with men? What shall we say of sacrifice, trial, struggle? Two hundred and fifty years have not changed their nature, and the same Providence rules still. They are still God's chosen discipline for nations as for individuals, by which they grow stronger and better. It is in the glowing furnace of trial now that the dross is separated from the fine gold. The education of the American people is not yet finished. We are instruments in the hands of Providence, as were our fathers; led through struggle and difficulty to a higher prosperity and a more noble national life.

The tree of liberty from the beginning has been watered by tears, and nurtured by sacrifices, and fertilized by the best blood of noble

hearts. It may demand still more of this generation. Till now we have shed no tears, we have offered no sacrifices. Other men have labored, and we have entered into their labors. It may be different hereafter. The precious boon which cost our fathers so dear a price to win, is worth to us that price again to keep. And it is not for us alone. Those institutions, in their infancy baptized with blood, in their strength are committed to this generation. The centuries past have given them to us, not for ourselves alone to be kept or lost, but to be held in trust for the centuries to come. Shall this generation go down a by-word and a reproach to all posterity, as that which has defrauded future ages of their rightful inheritance? Whatever others may do, let not New England be unfaithful. Let us be true to our Pilgrim lineage; and in the double name of Liberty and Religion, as of old, let us do our duty, and keep our trust.

SELECTIONS.

THE BIBLE.

LOOKING at the Bible merely as an historical fact; as a power in the world, which has influenced the opinions, and directed the life, and quickened the heart, of millions; which has been inspiration to the greatest minds of the race; which has lifted up nations from barbarism; which has been the spring of that philanthropy which is the boast of our modern civilization; and which is now the professed guide of three hundred millions of our fellow-men: surely these facts, apart from any consideration of its divine origin, of its claims to be a revelation from God, demand for it a respectful attention and diligent study from any one who would be considered a well-informed and intelligent man.

BIOGRAPHIES. — LIFE OF JESUS.

IT is with peculiar interest that we read, after the lapse of years, any record of the private life of a great man. Biographies usually deal so much with the outward and striking acts, that

they fail to give us, what we much more wish to know, the inner character of their subjects. They are often, too, one-sided representations, the work of admiring friends, who, in their anxiety to set forth virtues, omit to tell us of defects; who are willing to allow no shadows to mingle with the light of their pictures. It is almost painful to read the so-called lives of religious men and women. They are represented to be so good, that we feel an almost involuntary distrust, as if such saintly characters were works of fiction. I remember, that, some years ago, a biography was published of a distinguished clergyman, as eminent for his talents as for his virtues. Thousands read it, and were made better by it. But it was mutilated in a most important respect. The besetting sin of his early life; the sin which threw its fetters around his noble soul, and at one time threatened to sink him in dishonor and disgrace, but which, rising up in the might of a Christian purpose, he mastered: that is not mentioned. His struggles with this, his victory over it, which were really the marked points in his life, and which would be most useful to us as a warning and an example, are not recorded.

And, if not thus mutilated, biographies are usually very defective in those minute reminiscences, those circumstances, trifling in themselves indeed, but which, more than important acts,

really unfold to us the character. We are usually informed only of the outside life of great men; we see them on the busy stage of the world acting their part, and too often it is literally acting. Their attitude is thus too constrained and stiff for us to feel that we really know them. If we were only permitted to enter their homes, and hear their conversation with their families, as they were gathered around the fireside on a winter's evening, where all was free and natural, we should know them better. The unfeigned and easy talk of a single day would give us deeper insight into their characters than volumes of biography, as they are often written. Give us thus a leaf from their daily life, and the chasm of years narrows, and we feel almost as if we could discern their faces through the mist of centuries, and grasp their hands with the warm pressure of familiar friends. If we could have some autograph letter from Shakspeare to his wife, written in the unconciousness of affection, how much more vivid would be our view of him! If there should come to light, among the treasures of buried Pompeii, a fragment of a journal kept by Augustus, merely recording the employments and secret thoughts of a single day, how much new interest would it add to his name, as we meet it in the dry records of the Roman historian! That name would stand to us henceforth for a living man.

It is worth while to notice, that we have more of this sort of information respecting the life of Jesus than of any other remarkable person who ever lived. He left, indeed, no writings of his own: we must depend on the accounts of others for all our knowledge. But the evangelists stood to him in a peculiar relation. They were not merely his hearers, but they were his personal followers. They attended him in his journeys, as he travelled on foot over Palestine; they were witnesses, not of his miracles alone, but of his daily life; they sat at the same table, and partook of the same frugal meal; they heard his discourses to the multitudes, and his explanations to them in private. In short, they were members of his family. And hence we have in their accounts, not the formal biography, but the vivid and familiar picture of all that which they had seen and heard.

CHRIST THE IMAGE OF GOD.

DO we desire to know what God is? Discern "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In those bright days of the last week, I could not look at the sun, it was too dazzling for my weak vision; but, when the evening came, I could look at the new moon, and see the glory of the sun reflected there. The moon does

not shine of itself; it only reflects the light which the sun gives it: and in this reflection we can see the brightness, which, in its source, is too dazzling for our eyes to bear. As I looked, I seemed to find the interpretation of that passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Christ is called "the brightness of the Father's glory:" the very word in the original expresses just this idea, "the reflected brightness of the Father's glory." Christ is to us "the image of God" in this sense, that he shows to us all of God which can be manifested in a finite being, and which a finite being can comprehend. He is, on the scale of humanity, what God is on the scale of infinity. And this is what he means, when he says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Would you know God, then? Whatever qualities Christ possessed, ascribe them to God in infinite perfection.

Let us follow out this idea more into particulars. Do you marvel at those works of power, which, from the beginning to the end, crowd the gospel narrative? Was it not fitting, was it not to be expected, that he who came in his own person to manifest the image of God, should possess a power greater than that which belongs to common men? Without this power, the image of God would be incomplete. God is omnipotent. No finite being can possess this attribute in its infinity. Jesus expressly says, "Of mine own

self I can do nothing." But in his marvellous works we see the image of omnipotence, projected on the scale of the finite. He healed the sick by his word; he raised the dead; he made the blind to see; the winds and the waves obeyed him. He does not merely tell us that God is all-powerful; but, in his own wonderful power, he gives to our minds and to our hearts the express image of the divine omnipotence. God is omniscient. Christ is not infinitely wise, for no finite being could be; and he tells us that he was ignorant of a day and an hour which only the Father knew. But God's wisdom is reflected to us in the person of Christ. He knew the hearts of men. He spoke God's word as with authority. He declared the truth which he had received, not at second hand, but directly from the mind of his Father.

But, when we turn to the moral attributes of God, his justice, holiness, and love, Christ is to us a yet clearer image of Him who is invisible. God's goodness and man's goodness differ only in degree. A man who forgives his neighbor for an injury with his whole heart, exercises, on his small scale, the same quality which God manifests when he forgives us our offences. We are commanded to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect; that is, within our narrow range to manifest the same moral features which the Father manifests on the scale of an infinite Being. All

good men, as I said before, are partial images of God. But Christ is the perfect moral image of God. Would we know what God is? We look on the life and character of Christ, and from the image rise to the infinite Original. So Christ's mercy is to us a representation of God's mercy; his love, of the Father's tender affection for all his children; his life of beneficence, an image of that goodness which never ceases, and is over all his works. Do we sometimes despond, and wonder whether indeed a being, so holy and pure as God, can look with compassion on us in our weakness and error? Christ was the sinless one; and, with all his holiness, he came to seek and to save that which was lost. With sinlessness, what divine charity for sin, what pity and love for the sinner, are combined in that spotless life! We doubt no longer. As Christ was merciful, so our Father in heaven is merciful. Do we tremblingly ask, Can God, perfectly just as he is, forgive the sinner? Christ's life repeats the words of his parable, that, when the prodigal was yet a great way off, the Father had compassion on him, and went to meet him. Can God forgive? We see Christ on the cross forgiving his murderers; and that is to us an image of the infinite compassion and love of our Father.

My friends, why is this perfect image of the Father placed before us? That we may merely look upon it, and know what God is? Nay:

Christ has lived in vain for us, if that be all. We are to bring our own souls into that same image. We are to be "conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Jesus is not, in God's purpose, the sole representative of his perfections; but he unveiled the Infinite One, that, looking upon him, we too with him might, as St. Peter says, be "partakers of the divine nature." And so should "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image from glory to glory," till in each of us Christ's own prayer shall be fulfilled: "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me."

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

THERE is nothing in Christ's nature which should separate him from humanity, and lift his character into a sphere so high that we are precluded from entering it. We will not here discuss the difficult question of his rank in the universe of God's creatures. If, as some believe, he was a man like ourselves, illumined and inspired by God for his special work, inspiration could not give him goodness. Virtue cannot be given; it is no inspiration, but a product;

it is not something breathed in from without, but something achieved from within. Goodness is each man's own work; and, with all reverence, we can say that even Omnipotence could not create a perfect character. The truths of religion, with which God illuminated the mind of Jesus, led his soul to its perfection. These great truths, these lofty motives, which he has revealed, may in us, thus inspired by God through Christ, bear the same holy fruit.

Or if, as some believe, he was a super-angelic being, existing with the Father before the foundation of the world, this does not take away our example. There is a community of spiritual life. The lowest man may have the same powers, latent perhaps, yet the same, with the highest angel. Does not each spirit resemble each other spirit in its capacities, and differ only in its development? And so, if Jesus were an angelic being, his capacities, his spiritual faculties, may be the same with yours and mine, only by discipline developed above ours. He had grown up into the full stature of humanity. Even in this case, then, he could be an example for us; just as the man can be an example to the child, and can show to it of how much their common human nature is capable. There is an immense difference between the mind of a wise father, and the mind of the child who sits on his knee; and yet the one can be, and is, an example to the

other. Whatever Jesus was, we know that he was "tempted in all points as we are." He was sorely tried, and yet he conquered. From him we may learn to conquer.

SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

WE refer to the New Testament as our supreme authority in matters of faith and practice; and yet how meagre are its teachings, in some respects! We do not find every thing there, even of those things which concern our religious faith and practice.

Far would I be from considering this silence of Scripture as an imperfection. It is to me one mark of its divinity; itself one of its best lessons. We may learn by what it does not say, as well as by its positive declarations. Says Boyle, a devout contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton, "Scripture teaches us, like the sun-dial, not only by its light, but by its shadow." Let us trace where the shadow falls, and learn the lesson from the silence of Scripture.

There are two very marked omissions which especially attract our notice. And it is remarkable, that Scripture is thus silent upon those very points, where, if one to-day were to found a church, he would express himself with the most fulness and precision. The New Testament

gives us neither a ritual nor a creed. Wonderful omissions these, if we consider the history of the Church, and the demands of the human mind!

I. The New Testament gives us, I said, no ritual, no service of worship, no prescribed forms of devotion. The simple services of our Congregational usage, and the magnificent masses and chants of the Catholic Church, are alike the inventions of man. Worship is enjoined in the New Testament; but neither the one form nor the other is prescribed to us. How strange is this omission! The whole tendency of the religious life at our Saviour's time, was to forms. Heathenism was little beside form. And even Judaism was weighed down with the minute details and burdensome provisions of a pompous ceremonial. It was among these surroundings that our Saviour lived. Was his religion affected by them? So far from it, that he does not even prescribe to his Church one single point as an essential to their Sabbath worship. He does not give them one single form of devotion, which it is binding upon Christians to use. When his disciples asked him to teach them to pray, indeed, he gave them what we call the Lord's Prayer; but that was only as a model after which they should frame their own prayers. He has left his Church wholly free to make its own ritual, as might best suit its wants.

An omission like this, which is opposed to the religious habits and feelings of the times in which our faith had its origin, could not have been unintentional. I cannot think it was an accident, an oversight in the counsels of Him who sees the end from the beginning. He had a wise purpose in it. That purpose, as it seems to me, was that the Church might have power of adaptation and room for growth. A particular ritual may be well adapted to one nation, to one period of civilization, and be wholly unsuitable to the wants of another. This was the very element of decay in Judaism; the divine signature of "transient and to pass away" inscribed upon it. Those sacrifices and that ceremonial had been a powerful quickener of religious life and feeling in the days of the Judges and the Kings, in the days of Samuel and of David. They were outgrown when our Saviour came; a burden, not a help; deadening, not inspiring, the religious life of the nation. No form could have universal adaptation. Read over the ceremonies and services of the law of Moses, as you find them in the book of Leviticus; and, admirable as they were for those times, would they suit our wants now, or express our religious feeling? A religion which has, as an inseparable element, a rigid and unbending ritual, has within itself the elements of its own destruction. In this omission of forms, then, which at first sight would

seem so strange to us, we have only another mark of the divine origin of our Christian faith. In it we see the signature of universality, the credentials of a perpetual youth, the title-deeds of eternity.

Since the New Testament is silent in this respect, it has left us free to use any form of public or private devotion which we choose, and which we find useful. We have no right to impose one, which we have found useful for ourselves, upon others: they have no right to impose theirs upon us. I have listened to the pompous ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Many, no doubt, find in the gorgeous vestments, and burning candles, and chanted Te Deums and Glorias, that which quickens true devotion in their hearts: let such use this ritual. And I have sat also in the unpainted Quaker meeting-house; and we waited in silence till the Spirit moved some brother to speak what was in his heart. There, too, was true devotion. Each has its place, if it ministers to the religious growth of the individual soul; and in this is its sufficient sanction and authority.

II. The silence of Scripture with regard to creeds is much more remarkable than its omission of any prescribed ritual. If any one of us were a missionary in a heathen land, and wished to give an idea of what Christianity was, he would probably make a brief statement of doc-

trines; or, in other words, what we call a creed. Very different from that is the Scripture method. It would have been easy for Jesus, when the multitude were gathered about him on the mountain, to have given them a brief statement of articles of faith; but he does not do it. Instead of that, he declares what he regarded of much higher importance: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Read over that whole Sermon on the Mount, and I think you will find not one passage which has ever been a proof-text for a church doctrine. From all the words of Jesus, I believe you would find it very difficult to construct what is called by the technical name, a creed.

And I think we may say, without any fear of contradiction, that you will not find any thing in the whole New Testament which bears resemblance to modern sectarian systems of doctrine. The texts upon which these are based are scattered here and there over the whole Bible. Many of them can be used only in the way of inference; and entire doctrines are built up, in this way, on the inferences from detached texts. Look over the whole mass of dogmatic theology. What are the disputes about? It is rarely that you find in them the great fundamental principles of Christianity. Creeds are the division

lines of Christendom. The doctrines which are systematized in them occupy precisely that ground about which Scripture is more or less silent. The silence of Scripture is the reason of the need of a creed. If these doctrines were plainly revealed, all would be agreed upon them. And this is the reason that they are rarely stated in Scripture language. The words cannot be found in the Bible to express clearly and definitely the idea which is wanted.

It cannot be doubted, that Jesus knew more about the doctrines of his own religion than any who have in these latter days speculated about them. He did not choose to gratify our curiosity in this regard. Can we not see the reason why he did not do it? Was it not that he feared the very evil which has come to pass, that men would magnify belief above life? Had he laid down definite articles of belief, would not men have been satisfied with a bare assent to these? He has not done this; and yet we see that men have not escaped this great danger, even with human creeds.

There are two inferences which follow plainly from this silence of Scripture with regard to any system of theological doctrines. The first is, that, however useful these may be in their place, it cannot be essential that we should have them clearly defined. The Scripture has not done this for us, as is shown by the very exist-

ence of human creeds, which would be superfluous had the Scripture done this. All that is essential for us to know is laid down with clearness in the New Testament. There are some points which are either obscurely referred to, or altogether omitted there. We may consider this as proof positive that these are not of saving importance. In the words of Milton: "Ever that which is most necessary to be known is most easy; and that which is most difficult, so far expounds itself ever as to tell us how little it imports our saving knowledge. It casts an aspersion of dishonor, both upon the mercy, truth, and wisdom of God. We count it no gentleness or fair dealing, in a man of power among us, to require strict and punctual obedience, and yet give out all his commands ambiguous and obscure. We should think he had a plot upon us; certainly, such commands were no commands, but snares."

The second inference is, that we have no right to impose our creed upon other people. We cannot be sure that it has the divine sanction. It is our own work, not that of God's Spirit. It is good in its own place; it is well for us to exercise our minds on such questions; it is well for us to arrive at the truth by all the means in our power. But we must remember that our results are binding on ourselves alone. We have no right to call that essential which God has not

made essential. It is not our prerogative to deal out God's mercy, or to stand doorkeepers at the gate of heaven. It becomes us to be modest on those religious questions upon which Paul and John did not presume to dogmatize. Where Scripture is silent, it is well for us to be humble. "There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?"

THE WORLD DOES NOT HAVE JUSTICE DONE IT.

THE world does not have justice done it. It is often blindly, but sincerely, giving its rewards and praises to those who, it thinks, deserve them. Sometimes it chooses error; not because it is error, but because it looks like the truth. Sometimes it takes a vice under its patronage; but somehow it looks to it like a virtue. Convince it of its mistake, and how quickly the judgment is reversed! The world honors those whom God honors, whenever it can find them out.

Do you say the world is full of bad men, and therefore cannot honor goodness? But even bad men themselves honor what is good. Does a vicious man respect in his heart the sharer of his vices, as much as he does those who will have

nothing to do with them? He may say he does; but that does not make it to be so. Does he want his own children to join in them? Never. Does the intemperate man honor his companion, whom he has laughed out of his scruples, and made to be like himself? He despises him all the more, because he has yielded. Those who have thrown off the restraints of religion, do they honor and trust such as themselves? They are indeed sharp-sighted for shams and pretences, severe in their judgment of hypocrites; but in their hearts they respect any one whom they think to be truly religious. Would they leave their estates, their children, in the hands of their companions in irreligion? For such a trust they would seek one who was bound by the restraints which they themselves had abjured.

THE TRINITY.

THE doctrine of the Trinity, as it stands in the creeds, we consider neither rational nor scriptural. But we believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. We join in the ascription of praise, so many centuries old, which our choir chants: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be!" We may, as Unitarians, add, "and these

three are one."* God the Father, the only living and true God; God the Father, who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; God the Father, whose Holy Spirit is now dealing with human hearts, and inspiring them to all that is good and holy: this is the very essence of Unitarianism. These are not three: they are one. It is the One God our Father who does all. And yet the one God may be considered, in his dealings with men, under these three aspects, the Father, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier or Inspirer. This is very different from the Trinity of human creeds; but yet it is the germ of truth, as I believe, from which that sprung.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BUT this leads us at once to the question, how long is this punishment or discipline to last? I answer, till its end be effected, and the soul truly repents and ceases to sin and to love sin. I cannot believe that a merciful Father will stop short of that result. If the soul shall sin for endless ages, the divine retribution will follow close upon its track also for endless ages. If such a thing were possible, if such wickedness were conceivable, that it could for ever hold out against the Father's discipline, then the punishment must also be eternal. But I do not believe

that such wickedness is possible. It cannot be that one finite soul shall for ever resist the infinite wisdom and infinite love. It cannot be that one soul shall be eternally lost; for would not that dim the happiness of heaven, the bliss of saints and angels, nay, to speak it reverently, the beatitude of the Infinite Father, to know that one child of his was still alien from his all-embracing affection? Yes; it must be so. Be man ever so deeply dyed with sin, the divine mercy will punish, will love him, till it shall be cast out; for "it is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones shall perish."

INDEPENDENCE TO BE WITH THE MINORITY.

THERE is more need than ever to insist on the duty of manly independence. It is a noble quality, when unmixed with arrogance and bitterness. Blessed is he who can live true to himself in these days, when public opinion weighs down with such crushing force. But this independence must not be a wilful dislike of all which others like, and for the reason that they like; no vanity of appearing odd; no one-sided eccentricity, though eccentricity even is better than servility. It is not querulous and fault-finding, but just and magnanimous. It is not a

disrespect for others' judgment, but a proper respect for our own. Even in its worst phase, we can respect it more than the opposite extreme. There is something manly in him who despises custom, even unnecessarily; but what respect can we have for the frivolous votary of fashion, the weak echo of other men's opinions, the weathercock wavering with the breath of others' mouths?

Independence in thought and act, manly independence, has filled the hearts of all those great men who have led on the world to progress and achievement. We need not feel ashamed to stand in the minority; for there is good company there. Thus have all great discoverers and reformers stood, the leaders of the race in its onward march. And thus now stands civilization: the hordes of barbarism number more heads and hands than civilized nations. So with government: there are ten despotisms to one even nominal republic. And so with religions. Christianity, even nominal Christianity with its millions, is in the minority. Of Christendom, Protestants are less numerous than Catholics; and of Protestants, our own denomination is among the smallest. We could only, then, be truly on the side of the majority, by sacrificing our civilization, our liberty, our religion. Strange as it may seem, the majority have never been in the right since the world began.

PRESENT disaster and loss are no token that our effort or our cause is not God's. His own revelation twice has hung by a single thread. Twice his great plans for man have been suspended on a child's life, and that tender life was sought. From the ark of bulrushes on the Nile, and from the manger at Bethlehem, dawned the light for the world. He took care of his own. And as surely as truth and right are his, so sure may we be that they will never die. It does not prove that we have not the truth, because we are few. Our holy religion has held all its disciples in an upper room before now, and perhaps has never been mightier than in that day of its weakness.

CREEDS AND COVENANTS.

IN the book of the Acts, the missionary ordained by the apostles themselves, in answer to the inquiry what one must do to be admitted into the Church by baptism, is recorded to have only said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest;" and the new disciple was baptized on the simple declaration, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Our Pilgrim Fathers, true to their principles of religious liberty, true to the parting charge of

their pastor when they embarked from Holland, that they should watch for the new light which was yet to break from God's word, associated themselves into churches, not upon the basis of creeds, but of covenants. I have a copy of the covenant of the first church in Plymouth, the church of the "Mayflower;" and it is such that we could heartily adopt it as our own. Our church, which was gathered here one hundred and sixteen years ago, was organized on the same basis. We still wish to hold to their ancient freedom of opinion; we would cast not a single barrier in the way of the earnest inquirer. It is true, we unite upon profession of faith in Christ. This is, of course, essential. Ours is a religious society, whose basis is not the Koran or the Zendavesta, but the Gospel of Christ. It is a Christian society. Further than that, we would not define our opinions. We have no purpose of fencing ourselves in; imprisoning our souls within the damp, ancient walls of creeds, whence we can only look out on the sunshine of God's truth fearfully, lest we may see too much from the grated windows. We bind ourselves to no dogma; we put no shackles upon freedom of thought. We are Christians, it is true; but we may be Unitarians, Calvinists, Methodists, or Universalists, in our minor doctrines, and yet, under all these varying forms of belief, have the "unity of the spirit in the

bonds of peace." Though differing widely in our intellectual belief, as I know we do, we yet are willing together, as a band of brothers, to pursue what is of more value than any dogma, and exists in the earnest spirit under every creed, the Christian life. God be thanked that men can no more fence into their enclosures the Christian spirit, than they can the free air and the sunshine of heaven!

MULTIPLICITY OF SECTS IN CHRISTENDOM.

EXTEND this same principle, and it does much to account for the multiplicity of sects in Christendom. We find the secret of their origin in no accident, in no strange obliquity of the human mind nor perversity of the human will, but in this same diversity of endowment. Men have joined themselves together, so far as it is a free act of theirs, according to their natural affinities and sympathies. As, in the old philosophy, it was said that men were born Aristotelians or Platonists, so now, almost as truly, they are born Unitarians, Methodists, Calvinists, or Catholics. We may even, without drawing too much on our fancy, trace out their characteristics in the representative men of the apostolic company.

Let Peter stand for the patron saint of the Cath-

olic Church, as, indeed, they themselves claim him: Peter, who always had a hankering after forms and ceremonies, who could hardly cut himself adrift from the ritual of the old dispensation, and craved the old Judaism still; Peter, who always spoke first, and loved to rule, and yet a brave, noble, sincere man, who did a great work for Christ's cause. And then John, with his loving spirit, with his deep emotions, and his mystic piety: who in our day should represent him better than the Methodists, and their kindred sects of different names? Then Paul, with his scholarly attainments, his sharp reasoning, his acute metaphysics; Paul, the last of the apostles, let him represent a type of Christian life, which did not become prevalent till many years after Christ had left the earth; Paul, from whose writings so many controversies have arisen, "the beloved brother," of whose Epistles a fellow-apostle wrote that in them are "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction:" let Paul stand in many respects as the patron saint of Calvinism. And Thomas: has he not his disciples, those who wish all things proved, and desire not to receive on authority; who with critics' eye must examine the prints of the nails, even in the hands of the risen Master, before they can believe? They have their place still in the Church; as their prototype had,

who was in the beginning owned, not merely as a Christian, but even as a chosen apostle.

And whom shall we take as our saint? Not one, but all. We will try to unite the loving trust, the hatred of superstition, the clear intellectual perception of truth, and the deep piety of these several leaders, all together in one. And we will choose as our model, not any disciple, however noble he may be, but the Master, the Head of the whole Church, in whom all these scattered folds are joined in harmony; with our doors, like his, so widely open, that even the doubting Thomas may not be driven away from his brethren; a Church so broad, that each of the great tendencies of the human mind may find a place within it, and all may work lovingly together for the coming of Christ's kingdom among men.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

IS not diversity of belief an inherent necessity of human nature? The experience of the world seems to indicate it. Experiments for the promotion of unity of opinion have been tried on a gigantic scale. The arm of power would have forced men to it; the subtle logic of philosophers would have reasoned men into it: but both have failed. For centuries, the Church bent its whole

energies, and exerted its mighty influence, upon this single point. To bring it about, it built its Inquisitions, and organized its secret band of Dominicans, and kindled its fires, and strung its racks. The Inquisitions echoed with the groans of the agonized; the fires burned, and the scaffolds were weary with victims; but men still thought. The human mind still moved on groaningly, though pontiff and civil power strove to hold it down. They could as soon stop the earth in its revolution, as stop men from thinking.

And this we must not ascribe to any eccentricity or perversity of the human intellect. You can only crush mankind into conformity, either by curbing their freedom of thought, or making them so ignorant that they care not to think. I believe that the Church was not much troubled with heresy, when the darkness of the Middle Ages settled over her. The only way to make men think alike is to make them not think at all. This prescription is simple enough, but it will not answer the purpose of this generation. We must think in this century. The world is too old now to fetter its intellect. It no longer, with the ancient father, is willing to "believe, because it is impossible." From these facts, we can draw no other conclusion, than that the Christian Church has not now, and never has had, and never can have, unity of belief.

We believe that Jesus is the Christ, that he was specially commissioned by God to reveal to men his will. This is our confession of faith, no more, no less. On our church-books our names stand subscribed only to that first Christian creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ." This alone is our foundation; it is all we feel that we have a right to demand, as a condition of church-membership. Upon this groundwork, and with that message as an authoritative guide, we allow and exhort each individual, as he sees reason for so doing, to build for himself. Acting on this principle, we have practically, in our church, various shades of theological opinion. We join in our weekly worship, we sit at the table of our common Master, with representatives of many of the great sects of Christendom. We have with us the believer in the five points of the Genevan Calvin, united in Christian fellowship with the disciple of the Spanish Servetus. The common foundation is of more importance to us than the differing structures which we have reared upon it.

And it seems to me, that this principle, which unites us as a church, is the only one which can furnish a comprehensive bond of union for the Church Universal, and give it, amid all its inevitable diversity of form, still the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Upon this foundation, "Jesus the Christ," can the whole of

Christendom fraternally meet. As we widen this groundwork in one direction or the other, and make other things fundamental, do we exclude fellow-Christians from the family on earth, whom the Master may admit into the family in heaven.

My brethren, it is my feeling, and I trust it is yours also, that this pulpit is erected, not so much for the theology of the intellect, as for the religion of the heart; that its most important work is, not to make Unitarians of you or your children, but to make Christians of you and them. God grant that it may accomplish this best work, and be faithful to its great calling!

And, my friends, you are to-day offering your church to God in the services of Dedication. It is well that you have consecrated so much of your substance to this object, and have shown your respect for religion by giving her so beautiful a habitation. But what is all this beauty, this sky-pointing spire, and this deep-toned organ, unless it be a sign that you have also given your hearts to God, and your lives to his service? "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" All this beauty is not half so acceptable an offering to the Holiest, as a single heart which bows in contrition, and opens itself to the breath of the Spirit. May we give both offerings! May we make this best dedication, on this day of good purposes and resolves! Our only right

to exist as a Christian society is based on our partaking of the spirit of Christ, and doing something to make ourselves and others grow up into his likeness. We prove that we are indeed a branch of the vine, not by our beautiful leaves, but by our holy fruits of righteousness and piety.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

WE are here on the common ground of Christendom. There are not many places where all the sects are willing to stand together. How discordant are the articles of belief to which they severally require assent! How various are the theories by which they represent the philosophy of religion! And how different are the ceremonies by which they body forth in forms, to the senses of the worshippers, divine truth; from the pompous ritual of the Roman Church, as celebrated beneath the dim arches of venerable cathedral piles, to the silent heart-worship of those who gather in the plain Quaker meeting-house! The Roman and the Greek Churches even have their periodical brawl, disputing which shall possess the reputed sepulchre of Jesus. But his Prayer is the common possession of Christendom. You hear it under the dome of St. Peter's, chanted by solemn priests, the Pater-

Noster of that gorgeous ceremonial. You hear it in the imposing forms of the Greek Church. You hear it, too, in these simple structures, which we Protestants, by whatever name we may be called, rear to the worship of God. The words may differ, for many are the dialects of the worshippers; but the heart-language is the same, all over the world. Together they lift up the prayer, that God's name may be hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven; for it is the same Infinite Father whom they are all addressing. And together go up the blending petitions of many souls for their daily bread, for forgiveness of sins, for escape from temptation, for deliverance from evil; for are not all of these universal wants? And together from their million voices comes the anthem of praise: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Truly, this stands to us as a prophecy of that glorious coming time, when Christendom shall at length be one fold, and there shall be the millennium of union without uniformity. May God hasten its full coming!

And is it not true now that there is among Christians much more of harmony in their prayers than in their ceremonies, their doctrines, or their philosophy? Does not this fact point in the direction whither we must look for our future bonds of union?

But to return to the Lord's Prayer. How perfect is its adaptation to all the conditions of life! I have been much struck lately, in the course of my reading, with some illustrations of this adaptation to the most different circumstances. Figure to yourselves a little party of eighteen men, enlisted in the double service of humanity and science, far up among the polar ice. There they were, farther north than any civilized man had ever gone before, alone. Hundreds of miles of frozen sea intervened between them and help from any person. There they had passed the dreary Arctic winter, with its months of constant darkness, with its fearful cold, with its perils from disease and exposure; the more dreadful, because before untried. It was the time when we begin to expect the sheltered places to grow green in the spring sunshine; but with them it was the season of intensest cold, the thermometer averaging for days between forty and fifty degrees below zero. The little party had been weakened by sickness and the rigor of the climate; they had just before barely escaped with their lives in pursuing the object of the expedition; and they had returned with their minds almost unbalanced by the frightful cold to which they had been exposed. There was scarcely a well man among them; there were months of cold still before them; there was fearful disease threatening them. It was a time when the most courageous would

weigh the chances of life and death. And in this time of anxiety, of threatening danger, one of the eighteen died of that disease from which all were suffering. The foreshadowings of the same fate were on most of them. Think of a funeral there! Let the simple narrative speak for itself. "We placed him the next day in his coffin, and, forming a rude but heart-full procession, bore him over the broken ice and up the steep side of the ice-foot; then, passing along the snow level and climbing the slope of the observatory, we deposited his corpse upon the pedestals which had served to support our transit instrument and theodolite. We read the service for the burial of the dead, sprinkling over him snow for dust, and repeated the Lord's Prayer; and then, icing up again the opening in the walls we had made to admit the coffin, left him in his narrow house."

Turn to another scene, of widely different character. A body of men, as wise, as virtuous, as patriotic, as the world has ever seen, are assembled in council. They are the representatives of three millions, met to act for the holy cause of liberty. It is the birth-throes of a great nation. Says one who acted there: "A feeling of deep solemnity pervaded the whole assembly. They felt that their deliberations should be opened with prayer; and, however different their religious opinions, they joined in the morning

service of the Episcopal Church." Many great men there bowed the knee. Washington and a host of patriot worthies, whose names are now immortalized in the record of American Liberty, knelt and asked the blessing of God upon their down-trodden country. And in that service they repeated together the Lord's Prayer. It was the first prayer in Congress.

We might easily multiply instances of this sort; but these will suffice to illustrate our point. And why does it have this universal fitness? It is because it contains in itself the germs of all prayer. It is not a prayer, but prayer in brief, suited to all the circumstances of life. The child may express his devotions in these words; for they contain much of his childish aspiration and desire. The old man of fourscore may use it too; for he finds, that, in his age, human desires and needs are still the same. We join in it at the wedding and the baptism, because it is appropriate there. We utter it in the church, as the best expression of our united devotions; and I wish that here, after the good old fashion of that Church from which we sprung, your voices, as well as your spirits, would join in repeating its solemn words. And would it not diffuse a better influence through your families, if, before entering on the duties of the day, parents and children should reverently offer together the Master's prayer, and thus begin the day with serious

thought of their duty to God and to each other? Would we not do better to use oftener its sacred words, so appropriate to all our varying feelings and changing circumstances? Use them, did I say? Rather pray them; for is there not danger that we may rest satisfied with the familiar sound, though the spirit be absent? Let us beware how we thus desecrate this best of all prayers, these holiest of all words.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I HAVE thought, that, in this sacred presence, I could not direct your thoughts more appropriately than to the subject which these emblems of Christ's death suggest to us.

It may be that your dearest earthly friend, your mother or your child, is gone; and are there not some seasons when the remembrance of the loved and the lost comes up with peculiar vividness? Perhaps, as the anniversary of their death comes round, your feelings become saddened, and that anniversary is not to you as other days. The memories of the dead cluster around it. If it be a child that you have lost, how each article of clothing, each toy of his, however trifling, renews your grief, and calls up the remembrance of what will be yours no more here! You cannot avoid these ever-recurring reminders; you

would not, if you could. And if that mother, on the day before her death, had called you to her bedside, and asked you, out of gratitude for what she had done for you, and the love you bore her, to place a vacant chair beside your thanksgiving table in remembrance of her, would you not scrupulously perform this, though the request had been only intimated; and would you not remember her better through this outward emblem, which connected the occasion with her? And suppose, further, that she had asked her children to meet on the anniversary of her death, if it were possible, and partake together of a simple meal, to keep alive their memory of her, and their regard for each other. Would there be any thing unreasonable in this request; and would any child feel that he paid proper respect to his mother's memory, if he did not observe it? It might very likely be the case, that some of the children, though they loved her, were conscious, that, in their course of life, they had not wholly followed her wishes, and had gone astray from her instructions: but would they on that account think themselves bound to neglect her request; and, if they happened to be present when the others were about to celebrate the memorial supper, would they refuse to join in it? Nay: would they not feel that the memory of her love, and the recollection of her instructions, would give them new strength to resist the temp-

tations which had hitherto led them away from what they knew to be right?

Let us turn to another scene. In an upper chamber at Jerusalem, a little company met together to celebrate the passover. The appointed messenger of God had well-nigh finished the great work which had been given him to do. He had declared the truth which the Father had revealed to him; he had spoken as man never spake; and he had done mighty works of love and healing, in attestation that his mission was from God. It was the last day of his ministry, a ministry which had called him to much trial and disappointment; and he knew, that, on the morrow, it was to be sealed by his death upon the cross. There were with him those faithful ones who had followed him in his journeyings; who had drank in the word of life which he taught; and who, though at times wayward and dull of sight, were yet his truest disciples, his dearest friends. They were not perfect Christians. None of them had yet fully comprehended the divine spirit of their Lord. There was Judas, the traitor. There was the passionate and zealous Peter, who, before the cock crew, was to deny his Master. There was Thomas, the doubter. They were weak and sinful, like other men; yet into their hands was Jesus to commit his religion, after it had been baptized with his blood. He knew their past weakness; he knew

what would be their future failures; but he loved them still, and he wished to fortify their feebleness by the thought of his love. At that solemn hour, he wished to leave to them a memorial of himself; to strengthen them, through the trials of their future life, by the grateful remembrance of what he had been to them, and of the instructions which he had given them. He broke the bread to symbolize his body, which on the morrow would be broken for them upon the cross; he poured the wine, as an emblem of that precious blood he would shed for the salvation of men; and he asked them to eat and drink in remembrance of him. Could they neglect this touching request? Though Peter denied his Master, and all that little band forsook him in the hour of his trial and fled, yet they could not refuse; and through life they celebrated this rite, and gained strength therefrom.

And so it has come down through the centuries. Saints and martyrs have partaken of it, and gained strength for virtue and victory. Sinners, likewise, have remembered Christ, and struggled more faithfully against temptation. The world's greatest minds have sat humbly at Christ's table, and have learned of him; and the humblest too, the great company of the world's unknown, have there, in the remembrance of Christ, the Sufferer and the Saviour, found comfort and strength and peace.

It is the holy season with us this morning. The table of the Master is again spread with the bread and the wine, as in that upper chamber. Again his voice of invitation is heard from the sacred book, "This do in remembrance of me." He is not now present to our sight; but where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midst of them. He would exclude from his table none who believe in him; who strive, however feebly, to obey him, and to be his disciples. He asks all, whatever be their failures and their sins, who yet are earnestly striving after the Christian life. He invites those who, like the impulsive Peter, sin many times, and who even may have denied him in the thickly besetting temptations of the world, but who still repent, and are striving for the right. He invites those like John, who love him with a more tender affection, and who, even after resting on his bosom with holy thoughts at the Supper, may yet sometimes, in their weakness, desert him in the hour of trial. He asks those like Thomas, whose intellect may weave confusing doubts, but whose heart is true, that they may look on his cross, and be at peace. And he even asks Judas, the slave to wealth, if perchance, by the touching remembrance, he may have his thoughts drawn heavenward.

JOINING THE CHURCH.

I HAVE a deep conviction of the importance of the Church to the religious welfare both of individuals and of the society. Believing thus, I have felt bound to urge its claims upon you. This is the way in which it appears to me. It is a command of Christ, that all who believe in him should not keep that belief to themselves, but confess it before men. Bad men all about us, without hesitation and with a bold front, are confessing the Devil: it is fair and right that Jesus should require that the influence of those who are trying to obey him, should be plainly and unmistakably on his side. He does require it.

Now, I feel that every one of our congregation does believe in Christ; nearly every one, with more or less earnestness, is trying in some sort to live, or at least means some time to live, a Christian life. Here is the institution ready at our hands, which Christ, who knew the hearts of men, established as the best school for perfecting his disciples. Here is the Christian confession, unsullied by any human addition, the very same which apostles preached, and martyrs bore witness to; just the thing to give the wavering will its steady aim; just the thing to make constant and definite our Christian

striving, and support it with the strong force of Christian sympathy; just the sacrifice to make, and the hard service to render, which will add manliness and robustness to our Christian purpose. And so I should gladly see, not one-third of the adult members of the congregation, which is about the present proportion, but every one, a member of the Church. I should be glad to see it, because, from my own experience, I know it would be a help to you in being Christians. I should be glad to see it; for I know that Christ wants one of you no less than another, that he is content with not one less than you all gathered into his earthly fold. I know not one of you who is too bad to join the Church, and profit by it. I do not believe that one of you is so good as not to need it; indeed, the only possible ground of exclusion would be just this, if perchance any one is too good. If any of you are perfect already, you do not need it. I can see that such might keep aloof. But, if any are conscious of weakness and imperfection, if any pursue with stumbling steps the Christian path, if any attain not the good they desire, if you are not as good as you think you ought to be, come! It is just the place for such; it is a help in Christian living which you cannot spare.

And so with the Lord's Supper. We remember Jesus, I hope, sometimes at home; some-

times in the ordinary services of the Sabbath. We cannot think too much of him: the very thinking of one so pure and holy must make us better. We could not do a wrong act so easily, if he had just been in our thoughts. But who will say that our thoughts of him would not be more frequent and definite, if there were some stated time and some outward form to call him to our remembrance? Jesus wished to be held in grateful memory by his disciples; and so, just before he was crucified, he requested them occasionally to partake of a meal together in remembrance of him. As if your mother, on her death-bed, had called her children to her side, and asked them, out of regard to her memory, to meet together once a year on the anniversary of her death, and, partaking of a simple meal together, to think of her. Who could deny this last wish? To me, with this same simple and tender urgency, comes the last request of Him who died that we might live. "Do this in remembrance of me." I cannot refuse.

I HAVE thus expressed my views of the mission of the Church; and I wish that I could impress upon your minds my earnest conviction of its importance. I have not been pleading for mere forms. Your names, as far as you are

concerned, might be as well on any other sheet of paper as in our church-books, if no serious purpose accompanied the signature. I am not asking you to enroll yourselves as members, that it may look well in the table of statistics, and gratify my pride in the comparison with other churches. I should be shocked, if I knew that any joined to please me, without this religious purpose. I should feel sorry to have the Church filled up, if it must be, with dead, irreligious members. But I want what is implied in this act. I want you to be Christian men and women; and I want you to join the Church in avowal of that choice, as a help to your Christian life, that thereby you may advance Christ's kingdom, and may obey his command.

I wish that each one who now hears me would weigh the matter seriously in his own mind, and come to a definite decision upon it; and on the next Sabbath we would gladly welcome each one of this parish to the table of our Lord. In the name of the Church, and in the name of the great Head of the Church, I do now cordially invite you. It is an object in which we are all interested, that we seek to accomplish by meeting here. It is the Saviour, who died for you as well as for me, whom we remember. It is his last request to us all, which we would now fulfil. We meet together on the Sabbath and in our business: and I wish

that we all, if we have never done it before, might begin together in earnest to lead the Christian life; and, as we go on in our course, that twenty or thirty years hence, if God shall grant me so long a ministry among you, we might look back on a life which should need not many tears of remorse, and feel that those years of our sojourn together had been devoted to what we know to be life's true object. And I am looking further, to the time when we shall meet no longer here; when one by one God shall have called us; and then I wish that we may all, not a single one missing, meet in heaven. Blessed will this day be to us, if such shall be its issue.

THE SPHERE OF THE PULPIT.

YOU have united together as a society, and invited me to settle among you as a Christian preacher. In the fulfilment of this sacred office will be my principal means of influence and usefulness among you. It becomes, then, an important question to both of us, What is this institution of Christian preaching; this chosen instrument which God has used to accomplish his great ends in the world; and what is its appropriate function? It is, in brief, the appli-

cation of Christian principles to the wants and circumstances of man. Let us trace out the consequences which are implied in this definition, and we shall find that in it are involved the province, the object, the subjects, of Christian preaching.

1. What, then, is its province? What are the instruments which it may legitimately use? It has to do with Christian principles, and its sphere is religion and morality. It is, then, restricted to a certain class of relations, or rather to relations only as they point in this particular direction. It has nothing to do with literature as such, politics as such, business as such. The pulpit is no place to teach the principles of rhetoric or grammar, and apply them to books: that belongs to our schools and colleges. It has no right to discuss the principles of political economy, as applying to the measures which are at issue between our national parties: that belongs to the floor of Congress. It is not to deal with the price-current, and the sales of stock: these belong to the counting-room and the broker's board. But it has to deal with Christian principles, and with these alone; yet wherever these can appropriately be applied, whether in literature, science, politics, or our daily business, there is the appropriate sphere of the pulpit. It can never, then, come into competition with the lyceum, the lecture-room, the political caucus; for

it looks at subjects from a different point of view. The subjects they treat of may be the same; but, when the pulpit considers them, it must be strictly in a moral and religious light. If the preacher leaves this, his vocation, he is unfaithful to Christ, in whose name he speaks, and as whose ambassador he claims respect.

2. What should be the object of the Christian preacher? We have defined it to be the application of Christian principles. It must, then, be not theoretical, but practical. He does not preach, if he be worthy of his place, to increase his own reputation or for his personal edification, but for his people's good. He might write an essay on the same subject upon which he preaches; but this should be an entirely different thing from his sermon. The essay would be the theory; the sermon, the application. Here lies the distinction between the preacher and the theologian. The one enters into the philosophy of the matter, searches out principles; and, when he has found these, his work is done. But the preacher, though he may state principles, does not do his whole duty, if he stops here: they must be followed by what, in the language of sermons a century ago, was styled "the improvement." The one speaks to clear up doubt, and satisfy the intellect: the other preaches to make men better. The true sermon, then, is not designed, in its ultimate purpose, to appeal to the sense of beauty, to satis-

fy the understanding, to gratify the imagination; but it is intended to reach the heart: it may be through these various avenues; yet, if it merely gratify and please, it has been in vain. This object does not exclude appeals to the intellect; for, if a man would do his duty thoroughly, he must do it intelligently: but there must be a purpose underlying this intellectual appeal, a purpose to affect the life. The preacher does not labor to make men theologians, any more than this is requisite to making them complete Christians. The preacher's duty, then, is twofold; to explain and to enforce Christianity.

This ample field, it seems to me, has sometimes been restricted in two opposite ways, but equally injurious to the efficiency of the pulpit. On the one side, the preacher is expected to deal only with particular classes of duties. There are topics which are thought to be entirely inappropriate to discussion here, especially such as have excited deeply the public mind. We do not deny that these matters have been often discussed in a way not adapted to lead men to Christian views of them. But is the fact that they have been wrongly treated, any argument for not treating them at all? Yet it is surely a warning to the preacher that he himself should avoid this error, and discuss them in a Christian spirit, if occasion should make it to be his duty to consider them. It is said truly that party politics have no place

here; but Christianity has a place here, and its principles may apply to our duties as citizens as well as business men.

This freedom of selection is sometimes restricted on the side of radicalism, as it is called. Just the very points of Christian duty which some would think ought not to be mentioned at all, are placed in the most prominent light, and dwelt upon continually, to the neglect of others which are more important. They may be very well in their place, but they do not cover the whole field of Christianity. Jesus preached liberty to the captive, but he preached many other duties besides this. This restriction is more narrow than the other, and, I believe, would be more injurious in its practical effect; for it leads the minister to spend his time upon what is really of secondary importance. It may be well to instance what I mean.

There is the evil of slavery. Few here at the North doubt that it is contrary to the spirit of our religion; and, consequently, so far as we help to sustain it, we sin against God. Now, what are the consequences of this belief? Am I to turn this pulpit into an antislavery rostrum? By no means. Believing slavery to be a sin, there are other sins which we commit, which I believe to be worse, and these therefore demand more our consideration. More sin is committed in this congregation in neglecting the duty of prayer,

for instance, than in our participation in the sin of slavery.

There is the sin of intemperance, which seems to me of much greater practical religious importance to us here than Southern slavery; inasmuch as it lies nearer home, and may come over our own threshold, and drag away our children beneath its bondage. I believe that it is the duty of the pulpit to warn against this sin, as against all others, and to labor for its suppression; yet should I on this account preach temperance sermons on every Sabbath? Certainly not; for, doing thus, I should neglect the enforcement of more important duties. It may seem to me to be my duty to preach upon both of these subjects; but, if I do, I shall endeavor to preach Christianity, and have nothing to do with national or local politics. And, if a minister applies Christian truth in a Christian spirit even to these evils, there can be little danger that he will not be patiently and candidly listened to, and that what he says will not have influence, so far as it deserves it.

THE DUTY OF THE MINISTER.

MY work is to help you to be more Christian. So far as I try to do this, and only so far, am I fulfilling the duties of my sacred office. By this standard must you judge me; by this

must I judge myself; by this must I be judged at the bar of God. In this single scale must I weigh every sermon, every plan, every undertaking, in my relations with you. Does this word, does this institution, does this work, tend, directly or indirectly, to make my people better Christians? If not, as a minister of Christ, I have no business with it. And so, in my sermons, I have not endeavored to write what I thought would please you, but what I thought would do you good. I count that no sermon which does not bear in some way on this point. You may have had sometimes little interest in the subject of which I felt it my duty to speak. Perhaps, then, that sermon was not meant for you. Another may have found in it the very word which suited his need. Your sermon may come by and by, and the other may not find any good in it for him. That sermon may have come out of a personal experience, which I knew would come home to some beside myself; it may have been written to solve a difficulty of faith or practice; it may have been suggested by a conversation during the week, of which you knew nothing. There have been few written wholly at random. In the nature of things, it is impossible that the preacher should on every occasion adapt his word to all his congregation alike: if he does, he will be very apt to do little good to any of them.

To turn to another part of the minister's work, though I would not call it work; for to me it is rather a luxury than a burdensome duty. In these ten years, I have made nearly four thousand calls, an average of more than four hundred a year. Perhaps some may think that I do not come to see them often enough. I count that my deprivation, more than theirs. If I do not come, it is not from lack of will, but because the time cannot be spared from the studies, the work, the numberless other cares, of the minister's life. Whenever you feel that it is a great while since you have seen your minister, come up to see him. That is but one call for you to make: it is one hundred and twenty for him to go and visit you. I go to see you, as I said, because I enjoy it. And, though I have not felt it my duty on every occasion to obtrude distinctively religious conversation upon those whom I visit, most gladly do I converse on such subjects, when you yourselves introduce them. I have not wished to make my intercourse with you stiff and formal, but as that of one friend with another. And so, when you are sick, I like to come and see you. I would not come as the solemn priest, with the power of binding or loosing, but as a Christian brother, who sympathizes in your distress. And if you desire me to pray with you, not only alone but together it is, that we, as Christian men, ask the Father to bless this experience

to his child; and, if you do not express this desire, I do not feel bound to force it upon you, but perhaps pray for you without your knowing it.

There is another matter which has occupied much my thoughts as a point of duty, and yet upon which I have not been able to satisfy myself as regards practical measures. I mean our relation as a Christian church to that too large part of the community in which we live, which is not connected with any religious organization. There are so many reasons beside hostility or even indifference to religion which hinder the poor especially from attending public worship, that it becomes practically a very difficult question to deal with. And then there is indifference; there is vice; there are the young, who soon are to be active members of society, growing up under influences most corrupting and demoralizing. Can we as citizens, not to say Christians, leave them to themselves? I have felt that I was not merely your minister, but also that I was commissioned to do what good I could outside of the immediate circle of my parish; and perhaps sometimes I may have neglected you a little in your prosperity, in the pressure of what I felt at the time to be the more urgent duty to those wandering as sheep without a shepherd. If I have done so at any time, I ask your indulgence, for the sake of Him "who came to seek and to save that which is lost."

I am satisfied that we, as a Christian church, have not fully done our duty to this great class of the unchurched. We have not yet reached them as we might with Christian influences. And yet we have a mission from the great Head of the Church to these very wanderers from the fold. A church of Christ ought to be no selfish institution, a corporation for the benefit merely of its own stockholders. True to the spirit of Christ, it cannot be a dark lantern, but a beacon diffusing light and joy all around. The candle hid under the bushel goes out for lack of air; it must be set upon the candlestick. And yet, feeling this deeply as I do, I have not been able to satisfy myself as to the mode in which we can best grapple with this vital question. So far I have acted, from day to day, as the present emergency seemed to require. The time may come when some organized effort on the part of this church may be needful. If this shall be the case, I shall turn to you with confidence, that willing hands and open purses will not be lacking, as they never have been lacking, among you when the occasion has required.

THE RELATION BETWEEN PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE minister ought to feel that his lot has fallen among the very best people in the world; and the people, in their turn, should think the same of their minister. There may be on both sides, to the eyes of others, faults enough; but the parties concerned ought to have that amiable blindness, which ever seeks to overlook and apologize. They are each other's own; and almost a personal feeling comes up, when their merits are in question. Whatever her child be to other people, however ill-mannered and disagreeable, to the mother there is nothing else in the world like it. It is her child, and she will hear nothing of faults in connection with it. Who would think it safe to discuss a child's character before its parent? And so, in the relation in which we stand to each other, we should be more anxious to excuse faults than to find them. Like the marriage relation, if it would accomplish truly its end, it will not do to have it a mere business arrangement: there must be some warmth of feeling in it.

IT seems to me that something like the same feeling should exist between minister and people now, which Paul's letter shows to have existed between that ancient pastor and his flock on the shore of the Ægean; the same love, the same interest in each other, the same hearty expression of mutual regard. The work is hard, only when this fitting feeling is absent. It is not hard, my friends, to do our duty, if we only love. The mother does not complain, though she have to watch all night with her sick child. And, in proportion as there is this affectionate sympathy, will the pastor's work be successful. No one needs so many friends as he. By the tenure of his office, he is the intimate friend of each member of his parish, the sharer of their sorrows, and the rejoicer in their joys; the recipient, too, of many a confession of which the world knows nothing. He is as a son to the aged, and a brother to the young. His house is their house; the parsonage is the parish home: and there they may be sure that they will be ever welcome. And, as the years go on, the ties strengthen. He has been with them in sorrow and in joy. He has touched the brows of their infant children with the waters of baptism. He has given the religious consecration to the love of their sons and

daughters, and asked the blessing upon their new homes. And it is he who ministers the consolations of the gospel to the living, and offers the farewell prayer over the dead.

Take it all in all, what one among the various relations in which we serve each other, affords more room for all tender and affectionate feelings than this in which you and I, my friends, stand together? It has not been hard for me to feel as I ought towards you. I have had somewhat of the apostle's experience; that which prompted his warm, hearty letter to the Philippians. I may use his own words: "Now I have all and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you."

During the nearly six years of my life among you, there have been almost constant kindnesses to me and mine from you all, for which I have to thank you individually and as a society; and I believe I have yet to experience the first unkindness, either in word or deed, from any of my parish. You know not how much strength has come to your pastor from the kind remembrances and encouraging words, which you, perhaps, have long ago forgotten. I thank you, my friends, for your valuable gifts; and more than for their own worth do I value them as a sign of your good will; as a token that I am doing, in some humble measure, the great work of my calling.

We must never, in our interchanges of courtesy and good will, forget that which alone gives to our connection any worth, any meaning. We must never lose sight of the great end of the Christian ministry, the solemn work which takes hold on eternity. You have been very kind to me. I must beware, lest, in my regard for you personally, I fail to speak out my plain and honest convictions; lest I study to say rather what will please than what will do good. Because you are kind friends, I ought only the more earnestly to speak, to admonish, to exhort. Your kindness is a new call to faithfulness. You must remember that the office of the pulpit makes it to deal with great themes, with matters of deepest personal concern, with what may often be disagreeable truth, but yet truth which needs to be spoken. If, led by my sense of duty, I speak what seems to you uncalled for, give me credit at least for honest intention and Christian purpose. I am serving under my Master's orders, and he must be obeyed. Each of us, you for hearing and I for preaching, must give his own account to God. May we all be found faithful at the reckoning!

THE INWARD WITNESS OF GOD.

YOU have seen some stately temple, its great walls ostentatiously supported by the buttresses which rise against them. Are these showy buttresses and spires its main support? Nay, deep within are founded the massive stones, which hold up the great edifice. The buttresses might all fall, and the building would stand without them. They add to its symmetry, and in some measure to its strength; but they are subordinate, and the main dependence is on that which is out of sight, within. So, as we build the holy temple for religion in our souls, the outward evidences may add to its beauty and its grace; but on the inner witness does it stand or fall.

A great deal is said about proving the existence of God. We hear of the *a priori* argument, and then of the argument from design. Let us define what is the exact worth of these. They are good gymnastics for the human mind. It is well to confirm what we already believe by evidence from another quarter. It is a pleasing study, when we have already found our Father, to trace out the letters of that holy name written over all his works. It illustrates the wisdom and goodness of God, as we see the wonderful adaptations of nature. Moreover,

I have no doubt that these arguments are unanswerable, not a joint of their logic defective.

They are valuable in their place; but the foundation of our faith is not here. It lies lower than argument, in that deeper sea over which all the waves of logical controversies may dash themselves into idle foam, while it rests in quiet. I have known God. The Father has come to me, and I have heard his voice in my heart. My saying this may not justify my faith to those who have not yet found him; but to me that is all-sufficient evidence: it is not proof, it is knowledge. I have known a dear friend. Do I need to sit down, and reason on the matter; to discuss the probabilities of the existence of such a person; mark out his qualities, and argue that a friend must needs exist, for otherwise the world would be lonely and void? Or must I go into my parlor, and take up a gift from him, and argue that this gift could not have dropped down here by chance; that it was plainly a designed benefaction; that, if it was designed, somebody must have designed it, and, if a benefaction, its author must be my friend? What is the use of this roundabout process? I have known him and loved him, and he has loved me, and that is enough. And so we may say of God, the friend nearest to us, who does us more good than all others. We have spoken to him, and he has answered us, and we know

that God is. Better than a library of books of evidence, to me is one single prayer.

PIETY.

WHEN men seem to undervalue piety, there is some mistake about it. There is something which may indeed have assumed its name, which you heartily despise; and with reason. It is cant and hypocrisy; the prayers at the corners of the streets, which rise no higher than the men who hear them; the words of devotion coupled on to a mean and dishonest life. I think God despises that more than you can do. We know that Jesus never denounced any other class of sinners with the severity which he used against hypocrites. But beware, while you speak against cant and hypocrisy, that you do not at the same time ridicule and set yourselves in opposition to piety itself. It is only the precious jewels which are counterfeited. True piety is just as essential as the pretence of piety is contemptible. This is so very contemptible, because it is the counterfeit of a thing so very good and holy. When you speak against a hypocrite, call him a hypocrite, which he is, and not a "pious" man, which he is farther from than you are.

Genuine piety is respected by all: like gold, it is valued equally by him who has it and by

him who has it not. A soldier's letter gives the following incident. He was writing from a hospital, where he, with many others, was suffering from sickness and wounds. In charge of his ward was a nurse, a plain, simple-minded, kind, religious woman. She felt it to be her duty to speak very freely with the men upon religious subjects. On one occasion, as she was talking thus, one said, half jestingly, "Come, Sarah, can't you pray?" She said not a word, but knelt down there, and offered a simple, earnest, fervent prayer for them, and those dear to them. It went straight to their hearts; and those rough soldiers, who had begun in sport, were now drawing their coat-sleeves across their eyes to wipe the tears away. However seldom they might pray for themselves, they knew that that was a genuine and an availing prayer.

Do not, my friends, however much you may despise its pretence, allow yourselves to confound this with that which is genuine and real. Do not suffer yourselves even to speak as if you undervalued that. I must be more just to you than some of you are to yourselves. You value it. As I sit at your tables, why else do you invite me to ask of Almighty God a blessing upon the food which he has given? You value it. What are all these forms of public worship but a solemn mockery, if prayer have no substantial efficacy; if there be "no actual inter-

change between heaven and earth; of ascending petitions on the one hand, of descending mercies and fulfilments on the other"? You value it. Else as we stand by the dead, the last place in the world for hollow pretence, why do you ask me to pray for consolation and support to the bereaved? You value it now; and the time is coming to each of us when we shall value it yet more highly. The facts of this world, which have seemed so solid and practical, will by and by appear dim and unsubstantial beside it. As our friend said, "It is strange how insignificant every thing in this world looks from where I stand; of how little importance all the pushing and striving for position seem to me now to be; and even this great Rebellion appears as nothing." As heaven becomes nearer, these things, which we call now the great realities, begin to seem strangely unreal and shadowy. God is the great reality, and God's help will be the practical thing then. I do not find those who stand in this bright light, which unveils all shams and pretences, even such as we have imposed upon ourselves; I do not find them speaking much of their good moral characters, of what they have done, or even of what they have not done. It gives little comfort to tell them what a good life they have lived; they are more painfully conscious of its defects than any one else can be. But

they turn then to God; they think of his love and his great mercy. They strive more earnestly to feel the Father's presence with them; and they pray for his strength and support to uphold them. They lean upon him, and are at peace. Does not this disclose to us what are the great verities, the substantial realities of life?

The more you cultivate prayer, the more you will find it to be, not only a comfort and a joy, but a practical help in the work and conduct of life. The great God offers himself as a companion and friend and helper, among the perplexities and difficulties and trials of life. Do you think that you can pass through them alone? Be it so; but how much more easily, how much better, if you accept the offered help! "Watch;" you cannot watch too earnestly; but reinforce your effort with the help of Him who is stronger than you. "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation."

MORALITY AND RELIGION.

"ONE thing thou lackest." Of us, the outward act of selling all that we have is not required. But the spirit implied in it is essential now. We need, as deeply as the young

Jewish ruler did, to consecrate ourselves to God, to rise from the life of mere morality to the life of religion. What is the change, then, which is indispensable? Not so much of outward act. Perhaps often the outward life might go on very much the same. One might not be more generous than before, because he needed not to be. But there is a change of motive, of governing principle. What before was done from the impulse of a generous heart is now done religiously and with reference to God. The moral man of impulse becomes the moral man of principle. His life, his morality, is sanctified by the divine life which flows into it. We may illustrate this point by a matter of every-day experience. A person may perform a piece of music with perfect accuracy, with not a single false note; and yet there may be a great deficiency in the performance. There may be no soul in it: it may be only mechanical. But let such a one feel the thought which he is thus expressing, and new life is breathed into the music. Such music as this, is that which alone touches the heart of him who hears; it is this alone which is true music. So is it with the performance of these good acts: a spirit must pervade them, if they be complete, the spirit of piety and religion. The acts may be the same, as the notes of music are; but only thus do they become living. Are there not many who have

felt this need; who, in time of trial, have felt that their cisterns were not supplied from the unfailing fountain, that they were not connected with the infinite source of strength? One thing is wanting, an awakening to religion, a spiritual experience. God must enter into the life and sanctify it, or it is barren.

PRAYER.

WHAT act that any man can perform is greater than this, to commune with God? We may think that it is a great thing to lead armies on to victory; to combine the forces of nature so as to produce important results which have not been known before; to read the massive hieroglyphics written in the stone, and draw from the earth its story out of the dark abyss of time; a great thing to search beyond this earth into the mysteries of the universe, and make it yield up its stars and planets to our gaze from the infinity of space. And greater still it may seem to be to touch the hearts of multitudes by the living voice; to think, and express the thoughts in glowing words on the printed page, or through the painted canvass, or the sculptured stone. But to do these is not the noblest prerogative of manhood.

Greater than to lead armies to victory; greater than the pursuit of the inventor, the astronomer, or the geologist; greater even than the work of the sculptor, the poet, the philosopher, or the orator; greater than all these is it to pray. These all are communion with dull matter, or with the finite: this is communion with the Infinite.

GOD may see more real worship in one short prayer, breathed by one of earth's lowliest ones amid the busy whirl of looms and spindles, than comes to him on the Sabbath from the great cathedral filled with multitudes, who, with uncovered heads, gaze at the priests as they chant their Latin psalms, and bear their swinging censers. More prayer may go up this day from some sick-chamber, where the Christian waits in patience the coming of his Lord, than from the congregation in the house of God. In the service of this morning, if, of the four hundred gathered here, only ten joined in the worship, then was the church empty of worshippers, except those ten. If only the minister prayed, so far as God's worship is concerned, he might as well have prayed at home. The church had then but one worshipper to-day.

TOO much of our public devotion consists, not so much in praying, as in rehearsing the divine perfections, and repeating such thoughts as may be likely to bring us into a suitable frame of mind. Do we not in this imitate the Jewish prayers, as we find them in the Psalms, instead of the model given us by Jesus? The former were rather designed to glorify God than to help man; they were rather a tribute to almighty majesty, than the expression of human need; they were rather praise than truly asking. Do we not now hear many Jewish prayers, expressing indeed the praises of God, and describing his attributes, but not the Christian prayer of need?

THE Lord's Prayer, that model of Christian devotion, is spiritual; the expression of a real communion with God. But it is not this alone. It does not make devotion solely a state of dreamy ecstasy. It is also practical. It asks for the satisfaction of our commonest want. Such is the prayer, which, as has been well said, "the lowliest sinner may utter, and the holiest saint cannot outgrow."

CHRISTIANITY A PERSONAL RELIGION.

IT is a characteristic of our Saviour's teaching, that it is almost wholly personal. Christianity addresses men as individuals. It is a religion of the personal pronouns. Its keynote is, "Follow thou me." It does not lift up its voice, and say the world should be reformed, the human race should be more moral, this town should be Christianized. We might have very correct notions of the duties of mankind, and yet be faithless to our own.

There is a great deal of general declamation against the sins of the nation, as if the nation were some gigantic sinner against whom these reproaches were uttered. But this general talk is of little avail. Nobody takes it to himself; and the nation continues as great a sinner as ever. It does little good to speak thus about these indefinite sins, unless we point out each man's share in the guilt, and his personal duty in regard to it. We can see the absurdity of this, if we apply the same method on a smaller scale. Suppose the head of a family should see that things were not going on well; that the children were becoming disorderly and disobedient. How would he remedy the evil? Would he call the whole family together, speak to

them of the beauty of order and the necessity of obedience, and strive to impress it on their minds that families ought to be orderly and obedient? Such a general lecture might be very finely worded and ably given; those who heard it might be impressed with the justness of the thoughts he urged: but probably things would go on just as before. The wise man would speak to each one separately, and enforce upon each child his special duty. Thus the family would become orderly and obedient. So when Christianity would reform the world and purify it from its great sins, when it would fill the community with its spirit, it does not begin with the whole, but with individuals. It makes each citizen better, and thus the state more Christian.

HAPPINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IT may indeed be a heavy load which the Christian sometimes has to bear up the heavenly hill, though the goal is before him, and God's strength sustains; but it is not so heavy as that which the traveller on the other road must carry. There are sacrifices to be made for God and duty; but tenfold harder are those which sin requires. Many true servants of Jesus have yielded up their lives for the truth, and borne

their last witness from the rack, from the scaffold, from the flames. But Satan has had more martyrs than Jesus; and in more fearful agony, and in more terrible torture, have they borne their witness. "They have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast."

IT seems as if some men regard repentance as the putting on a yoke; and becoming religious, as the taking up a burden, necessary indeed, but which yet interferes somewhat with the joy of this present life. Never was there a greater mistake. The prodigal trembled as he went back over his long weary way, because he did not know how the father would receive him. But we know. We know that we shall be welcomed to the home from which we have strayed. There is joy even in heaven over one sinner who repenteth.

RECEPTION OF DIVINE INFLUENCES.

THE same inspiring influences are about the soul of the sinner, which, when received, bless and elevate the mature Christian. The heavens are rich enough for us all: not one is forgotten, not one is overlooked in the distribu-

tion of the divine gift. But, if the same gift is bestowed upon all, what makes the difference which we see in different persons? They receive it differently. When, yesterday, the shower so gladdened the earth, though it fell upon all alike, there were some spots upon which it did absolutely no good. They are to-day just as they were yesterday. It called forth an answering smile from the green lawn; but the ledge of rock is just as barren and hard as before. It fell as gently on the dead tree as on the beautiful maples; but the unsightly wood sent forth not a single leaf in gratitude.

NOT the dim cells of Catholic monasteries, not the busy Moravian mission-houses, should cherish a piety so deep and lofty as this, which is the natural fruit of our faith in God the Father.

ADDRESS TO THE VOLUNTEERS, MAY 3, 1861.

WE know we have no need to charge you to be brave. Cowardice does not run in West-Cambridge blood. Let the 19th of April, 1775, answer for that. We know that our flag is safe in your hands; that, wherever it goes,

you will follow: though it lead into the thick of the battle, there will you be found beside it. We know you will be true to it, whether your lot shall be to rest on your arms beneath the shadow of the capitol, or to open the way through the rebellious city; true to it, whether it waves over the forlorn hope in the beleaguered fortress, or whether in triumph you roll out its streaming stars over the rebel capitol.

But, my brothers, do not forget that you are soldiers also in another warfare; one in which we at home are bearing you company; a warfare whose perils are greater than those of the battle-field. Be on your guard, we beseech you, against the temptations (and strong they are) of a soldier's life. Come back to us nobler, purer, and more Christian than you went, because you have grown strong by the conscientious discharge of duty. It is said that those Puritan warriors of Cromwell, whose backs no army in Europe had ever seen, though threefold odds were against them, used to advance into the battle with prayer and hymn. They were never vanquished, because they felt that they were serving God. So feel, my friends, that you are the Lord's soldiers, as well as your country's. Let not vain ambition, nor desire for revenge, nor mere excitement, be your animating motive, but the firm purpose to do your duty. As the old Crusaders wore the cross on

their garments, so let the cross be signed on your hearts, the holy emblem of sacrifice for the right, for conscience, for duty. In that sign you will conquer.

Go on, then, my brothers! It is for us you are going, and not for us only: you go to fight for your homes, your wives and your children, your fathers and mothers, for your country. You will one day, I trust, be proud when you remember these times. The page of history is again opened. A new Lexington has already been inscribed in it: perhaps you will have a share in recording a new Bunker Hill. You leave our beautiful town: we who remain here will watch you in your future course. In these homes of ours, the map will often be unrolled, and we shall trace the march, and point, "Here is our brave company." And as the despatches come home from the war, telling of hard-fought battles and glorious victories, they will be spelt over, syllable by syllable, by West-Cambridge firesides, that we may get some tidings of you. Your good behavior and your success are ours: make us proud of you! When you are worn down by fatigue and deprivation, know that our hearts are following yours; and, when dangers are all about you, be brave and strong: for many prayers will daily go up from these West-Cambridge homes, that you may be kept safe. And when you are

tempted to do wrong, as tempted you will be, think first of your God, and then of your home, and be firm. Yes: you will be constantly remembered here. Friendly wishes will bridge over the distance; and loving hearts, as they join in their evening devotion, will rejoice when they think that the same stars are shining on you as on them, and that the same Father is watching over both. And from the gathered congregations on the Sabbath, from the family altars, and from silent hearts in the watches of the night, we shall send up prayers for you; prayers that you may be guarded from danger, that you may be kept from sin. May God bless you, as you go from us! Our hope and trust is, that each one will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country. Stand fast in the faith, my brothers; quit you like men, be strong!

CHRISTIAN MANLINESS.

TRUE manliness and true Christianity are identical. The being a true man, and the being a true Christian, are one and the same thing. The religious life is not a foreign growth, grafted on to the nature God has given, but simply its healthy and symmetrical development.

Do we always consider it so? Is not our ideal of a Christian rather of one encompassed with sufferings, bowed down by bodily distress, bearing patiently the heavy burden? Is not the noblest trophy of our religion found in a poor decrepit, worn-down brother, over whose sick-bed shines the light which is not of this world, and the peace which passeth all understanding? Do we not look for our model Christians among those who cannot be any thing else? Blessed be God, that his strength *is* made perfect in weakness, that his rest is for the weary and heavy-laden!

But we must not take the Christian in sickness as the sole model of the Christian life. The religious principle, ever the same, should take to itself a form corresponding to circumstances. The Christian in sickness and in trial is one type; the Christian in the full strength of manhood, and in the active pursuit of duty, is another type of the same spirit of Christ. We want both: especially in these days do we need the latter. We want a religion that has muscle in it, which is flushed with the red blood of health. We want strong, healthy, sound, cheerful Christians. We want a manliness which is more robust, more efficient, and more active in every good work, because it is based upon and pervaded by this very spirit of deep trust in God, and the steadfast purpose to obey him. It is the

Christian soldiers who give invincibility to our armies; it is the arm which is uplifted, not in brute passion, but with the sober purpose to serve God, that strikes the strongest blows. Let the brave commander of our flotilla on the Mississippi * be our example of Christian manliness. None has been more energetic, none more practical, none more prompt in emergency, none more brave in danger, than he; and yet he is a man of prayer: energetic, prompt, brave, because a man of prayer. Returning from that first great victory which thrilled the country with a new hope, weary and worn with his great responsibility, he went to join in the Sabbath worship; and, finding the clergyman absent, he occupied the pulpit, and in prayer thanked the Lord for his goodness, and in the sermon told his wondering hearers how he had wrestled with God in prayer, and he had given him the victory.

Who, now, is the true man that the world admires? Sketch out his qualities. He must be courteous, generous, courageous, patriotic, truthful, reverent. These are the qualities to which the world loves to give honor: even one or two of them alone may, by their lustre, cover up many shortcomings and deficiencies. But what are these? Trace back to their roots these qualities. What is the single formula which comprehends them all, if they are genuine and

* Rear-Admiral A. H. Foote.

true? What is courtesy? It is not sham politeness, which is only skin-deep, which puts on the graces for the sake of winning men's favor and admiration. No one honors that. It is kindness; it is, as the accomplished man of the world himself defined it, "sacrificing one's own self-love to other people's" in little things. Is not this, then, in its essence, self-denial? What is generosity? It is not giving away that which one can as well spare as not; but it is the giving that which costs something. Is not that a sacrifice of self? What is courage? It is not by any means the cowardice of him, who fights because he is afraid that men will call him a coward; nor is it the unthinking impulse of rashness. But he is courageous, who, knowing the danger, deliberately encounters it, risking himself for something which is greater and dearer to him than himself. What is patriotism? It is not the cheap talk of devotion to the country and desire to serve it, when every thing moves along prosperously: but it is the standing by it in time of need; it is the being willing to make some sacrifice for it; it is the feeling that God and country should be first, and self afterwards. It is self-devotion. What is truthfulness, but the spirit which prompts a man to tell the truth, cut where it may; though it may strike home to his own dearest interest? And what is reverence, but the bowing one's self humbly and obe-

diently before Him who is over all? See you not how all these qualities of the true man spring from one and the same root, self-sacrifice, self-denial?

What, then, is being a man, but being a Christian? What is the aim of Christianity, but to make us true men, to develop our powers and faculties in the way that God intended they should be developed? I count it one of the hidden blessings of these times, that we are called by them to a higher manliness. Prosperity is good for teaching us some virtues; but this is not one of them. It flourishes best in the shade. It is nurtured among storms. We are happiest when all is quiet and prosperous; but it is adversity which develops the inner strength, and brings out the *man* in us. A man never knows what he is, till he has been trained in its stern school.

And so is it with a nation. Perhaps there could not be a greater calamity to a country than uninterrupted prosperity through even three generations. Boasting would then have its free course; the manly virtues would grow puny, because they had little exercise; the strong and heroic traits in human character would be softened down; and patriotism would become a tradition of the olden time. But let a great danger startle the nation out of her sleep! A new spirit is born, which, in the years of quiet and prosperity,

you had looked for in vain. The spark of patriotism is kindled into a living flame in a million hearts. Men take up the cross gladly, and sacrifice themselves and all they have on the altar of their country's service. We begin to trust in something higher than ourselves; we turn again to the God to whom our fathers prayed, and the unwonted petition for help for our country rises from our lips.

The world is accustomed to call a nation strong, when peace and prosperity reign within its borders; when its granaries are full of corn, and its treasury of gold; when its material interests are in the full tide of success. Yes: but then its soul may be weak, and its strength enervated; it may be trembling to ruin. Call it rather strong, when it is united as one man by one common cause and one holy name; when it has grounded its feet on the rock of conscience, and knows that its cause is just. Call it strong then, though its treasury be bankrupt, and its vessels rot at its wharves. Call it strong, though the world be in arms against it.

IMPROVEMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES.

OPPORTUNITIES are nothing in themselves, but as they are used. We might define them to be "the occasion improved." These

occasions are always offered to each man; but each man does not see them, each man does not use them. That which we neglect, may be to others a golden opportunity; and, when we see the result, we may forget that the same chance was ours, and may lament because we are not as fortunate as others.

There were many boys in the Royal Artillery School at Brienne; but it was reserved for only one of them to be a Napoleon. The circumstances which surrounded his early life were shared by many. The same restless excitement of the French people which he used as a path to empire, the same desire for conquest, the same fierce passion for liberty, existed as facts, and offered occasions to other men; but he alone used them, and made himself what he was. Many a boy had seen the boiling water lift the cover of the tea-kettle, and perhaps many have wondered why it moved up and down by some invisible force; but it was the boy Watt who made this fact suggest to him the steam-engine. The occasion was open to every one; every child has had it presented to him: but he made it an opportunity, he used it.

As Galileo was walking in the Cathedral of Pisa, he noticed one of the lamps, suspended from the ceiling, moved to and fro by the wind. Chandeliers many times before and since have swung, and many people have noticed them.

But it attracted his attention particularly; and from it he made the great discovery of the pendulum. Many of the good Christians of England, during the eighteenth century, visited prisons, and lamented their wretchedness and their abuses; but Howard set himself about the practical work of improving them. And so, at the time of Luther, many monks pored over their Greek Testaments in the cells of their monasteries; many good Catholics were shocked and grieved by the infamous traffic in indulgences: but he used the opportunity, he translated the Bible into the language of his country, he led on the Reformation. Occasions are open to all of us. We make opportunities for ourselves. Life and nature have a language for all; but all do not read it. "The same event happens to the wise man and to the fool."

Many men hurry through life, and its events leave little trace of their happiness. Events are not experience. A man may go through much of incident, and yet be little wiser. It is the event improved, the event digested and assimilated to the character, which is experience. What shall be the influence of circumstances, it is ours absolutely to decide. We are free. No human power, no earthly event, can compel us, unless we consent. We are sovereigns of ourselves, subject only to God. We are his vicegerents in governing our own souls.

How great is the goodness of God, who has thus given into each man's hand the mingling of his cup of life! He gives the ingredients, and we make them bitter or sweet as we use or abuse them. It is not good, it is not evil, that he gives us; but that from which we can produce what we will. How sad is it to turn from our possible greatness to our actual littleness; to consider ourselves as we are, and not as we might be; to look at man, driven hither and thither by every changing event, the sport of circumstances; to see him sin because he is tempted, unhappy because he has not used the opportunity of trial to become strong! Let us assert our independence; let us use our birthright of freedom; let us claim the prerogative of our manhood. "For all things are ours; whether the world or life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are ours; and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

ABOVE, we must remember, life is not measured, it is weighed: the record is not how long, but how much.

ACTIVITY IN OLD AGE.

EVEN the decay of our faculties, I am persuaded, is much in our own power. Though we cannot repeal the law of our nature, yet we can retard or hasten it. I believe that the loss of faculties in old persons is much owing to themselves.

It is the law of our constitution, that our powers unused shall grow weak: use strengthens them. It is common, when a person becomes advanced in life, for his friends, from motives of kindness, to urge him to give up all thought of business, and to enjoy his leisure. He is told that he has done enough, and that he should now cease, and enjoy the fruit of his labors. There could not be a more mistaken kindness. The powers even of a young person, if unused, grow weak; and why should not this rule apply more strongly to the old? We notice it as a general fact, that those who continue actively employed bear their age, and retain the exercise of their faculties, the best. Is it not almost always the case, that interest in matters of daily concern fails, before the capacity to attend to them is lost? Tools unused are ruined by rust quicker than they wear out by constant work. We have known men, who have seen even their ninety winters, with faculties

still fresh and vigorous, and as competent to any intellectual work, as they were thirty years before. It is because they have kept up their interest in what is going on around them. They have not let their faculties rust out. The studies, the business, of their earlier life, have not only cheered them, but have been the strength of their advancing age.

PATIENCE TO WAIT FOR RESULTS.

LET those who crave the outward show of success turn to the example of the great Teacher. During his own life, how small were the apparent results of his ministry! It would be easy for one who looked no farther than the outside, to call that a failure. And yet that ministry was given by inspiration, and was fortified by miracle. Who can now estimate the stupendous results which have followed directly from those three years of apparently unsuccessful work? Here surely is encouragement, so long as the world shall last, for men to work on, nothing doubting, sure that the same God rules now as then.

And it is precisely the same with any good we undertake to do on a wider scale, any great truth which has come to us, and which we wish

to impress upon men. How slowly it advances! How impotent seem all our exertions! And yet our work, if it be hearty and earnest, is never lost. We must work out many hard problems by the rule of addition. No single effort can do all. Even after our object is accomplished, we shall not be able to place our finger on any one act, and say that this did it. It must be by the cumulative weight of many countless efforts and prayers that any great good shall be accomplished. It is enough for you that yours are added into the sum.

You see the workmen in some great quarry, looking like ants as they creep along its precipitous sides. What can they do, so weak themselves, with so weak tools, to cut away the hard granite which has borne unshaken the winds and the waves of uncounted centuries? Still they work on, and you hear the quick blows of the hammers, as inch after inch the tool sinks its little circle. Each thimbleful of dust which they take out seems, indeed, to make very little impression on the solid rock. One might say, What will all this amount to? It will take a hundred years to do any thing in this way. But look on. Grain by grain, the rock is excavated, the place for the powder is prepared, the place from which the change will come.

How many years of resultless, perhaps hopeless work must be done before any great moral

or social change shall be brought about! How many earnest workers have desired to see the day of the Son of man, and have not seen it! But they have prepared the way, they have done the pioneer work. The unpopular truth gains power. It gains a weak minority, then a strong minority, then a majority, and then it is admitted among the established truths of the human mind. Those who worked in discouragement and in doubt are as important to the result as he who fires the train, and sees the huge dead mass heaved and falling over.

We must not leave the subject without applying its lesson to the home education of the young. I suppose, if we consider the future consequences, this is almost the greatest work in which any one of you is engaged. And yet there is perhaps no other sphere of action where we have to work so completely in the dark. It is almost impossible here to calculate the results from our separate efforts. There are so many things to be taken into the account, so many hidden springs of influence, so many opposing powers at work, that we cannot unravel out of the tangled web any particular thread of influence. And then, too, we have to search out effects over so wide a surface, which does not come within our vision, but extends backward to the dim past, and forward, we know not how far, into the dim future. The fruit of what

we sow is so long ripening, that we can only form very general conclusions. I think it is here, almost more than anywhere else, that we must work on with faith in that which we cannot see; and a very discouraging work it sometimes is. But we must be sure of this, that every duty, however small, which we do faithfully, does so much in the right direction. Are there not three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and are not the little influences of each day added into the character? We cannot be sure what will result from any one of them; but only faithfulness on our part will give us an easy conscience, when that result is made manifest.

But this must be borne in mind, that it is only those who are faithful who can afford to wait. It is only those who are diligent, who can have this strong confidence in that which they cannot see. This assurance offers no encouragement for the idle, no comfort for the unfaithful. It is for such as in doubt and uncertainty strive to do the best they can, and only for such as these. They can rest with unfaltering confidence in the divine promise. They can trust their work to the future without a doubt. They can experience the truth of the prophet's word, "He that believeth, maketh not haste."

GOD'S GREATEST TRUSTS COMMITTED TO THE LOWLY.

WHAT person in the first half of the last century had God's greatest trust to execute, the one which was to have the most important bearing on the interests of the world? I suppose that you would name king after king, who, in the tangled web of diplomacy or on the bloody field, was seeking aggrandizement for himself and for his nation. They thought so themselves. But the great plans which filled their minds have crumbled to the dust. Men's memories have not room for them; and history, growing briefer and briefer, may at last forget even their names. It was not they who had God's greatest trust.

I think that it was the wife of an obscure Virginian planter, who came to the baptismal font, and there promised to try to bring up her son as a Christian; and then in her country home, with a distinct feeling of her responsibility to God and in a spirit of faithfulness to that vow, tried so to bring him up that he would be an honest, truthful, patriotic, religious man. This work of hers, comparatively unimportant though it seemed amid the din of battles and the jangling of rulers; this work of hers, so Christianly done, outweighed in God's

balance then, and in man's balance now, the toilsome plans and undertakings of generals and kings. Those unconscious days of quiet Christian living, of careful attention to parental duty, gave to the world a fruit richer than all that the centuries before had garnered. It gave to us our Washington.

"HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD."

WHAT a noble memorial this would be, to be inscribed by loving friends as a testimony of their respect! Prouder epitaph than this the sculptured marble has never borne. And yet, though I have seen numberless verses of Scripture used as the expression of affection and reverence for those who have gone, I do not remember ever to have seen this. Why should this be passed over? Is it because it is so plain and clear, and because the inconsistency of even excellent characters with this praise would be so evident? Is it because we choose rather words which are veiled somewhat in mystery, where the contradiction would not be so manifest?

But what better thing could we strive for than this; not to have it inscribed on our tombstones, but written in God's book of remem-

brance? What loftier aim can we propose to ourselves than this most Christian purpose: I will do what good I can; I will add as much as possible to others' happiness; the burdens and troubles which weigh so heavily on some, I will lighten so far as is in my power? Let this sentence of Holy Writ, this example of the Holy One, "he went about doing good," rule this day, this week, this month. We shall still be busy as usual upon our ordinary work, but also "about our Father's business." Doing this, we need not be anxious about ourselves; we need not fear lest we have fallen from the faith; we need not puzzle ourselves with perplexing creeds, with dark beliefs, with anxious questionings. We need look no farther; we are safe; safe here, safe in all the contingencies of the future world. For we are walking in the very steps of Jesus; and those steps lead surely to peace and heavenly bliss.

IT is more blessed to give than to receive; or, as Shakspeare translates it, "It is twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." There is no happiness like this. Sweeter than the memory of appetite indulged, plans successful, ambition realized, is the thought of good done. If you have ever tried it, you

know. We have helped somebody to be better; some sick man remembered our visit last night in his evening prayer; some poor little child will not shiver next week, as they did the last on their way to school. I verily believe we feel happier about it than they do.

MUTUAL DEPENDENCE.

THE savage is the only really independent man. He builds his own hut of boughs and bark; he digs up the little plot of open ground beside it, with the wooden hoe of his own making; he raises his corn, and grinds it in his own mortar. He draws his sustenance from the stream and the forest, by his own unaided dexterity. He lives free from most of the dependences of civilized life, and free from its comforts and conveniences too. If all mankind except his own family were at once destroyed, it would matter little to him. He would be as comfortable as before.

But in civilized life comes an increase of wants. Our idea of comfort is not the same with that of the savage. We need more. Division of labor comes in to help us in supplying these wants. One man does one thing for a hundred others; and they, in turn, supply for him

a hundred different wants. Thus, it probably required the contributions of five thousand men to build and furnish the house you live in. So each does for all, and all for each. And in this mutual dependence is the very essence of our civilization. Such, then, is the law of our social life. Our relation is one of mutual help and mutual want. This is the fact, and we may derive a practical lesson from it.

And, first, it teaches the foolishness of pride, on the one side, and of abject servility, on the other. What is station, and what is wealth, but the opportunity to serve the community in a particular field of action? and what is poverty, but the necessity to serve it in another? The rich and the poor are alike servants of the common whole. The merchant serves the world in one way, and the day-laborer in another. We need not decide which service is the more honorable, or which place the more truly respectable. It is enough that each is necessary to the common good.

Honor and respectability rest, not in the particular sphere which a man fills, but in the way in which he fills it. The poor cannot say to the rich, that he has no need of him; nor can the rich say to the poor, that he has no need of him. He who works with his brain has no right to despise him who works with his hands; for the Lord of the world requires, for its good,

hand-work as well as head-work. Some may be only hewers of wood and drawers of water: there is no degradation in that, if they only perform their duty well. There must needs be wood hewn and water drawn. There must be diversity of callings among men. What sort of a world should we have, if men were all merchants, or all farmers, or all lawyers? We need all the thousand occupations of civilized life; and none can claim that his is peculiarly necessary, for all are essential to the comfort of the whole.

No one need feel, then, that his sphere is narrow, and his work unimportant. If he does it well, the world could not spare him from it. It needs a man in just that place, and no other than he would answer as well. There is but one place which is dishonorable and degrading; and that is, to be a dead branch on the tree of life, a withered limb of that body of which we are all members.

CONTAGION OF EVIL.

AT times there seem to be epidemic sins, which break out here and there over an entire community. Sometimes it is incendiarism. The papers are full of house-burnings. All the bad blood in the community seems to

show itself in this single crime. And then there are cases of poisoning all over the land. Then suicide is the prevailing sin of the hour. Perhaps the infection takes a new form. It attacks those in places of trust, and the whole community is startled by reports of defalcations, embezzlements, and frauds, committed by those high in public confidence.

The tide which is passing over seems to sweep away those who are weak in principle and of unsteadfast character. But the contagion of evil is of such nature that it even affects those whose principles are fixed, and whose will is strenuous against it. Place even a Christian in company where he hears habitually profane language, and, though he strives against it, his religious life will be sullied, the delicate plant of reverence and piety will droop and wither. Though he utters no blasphemy, yet, against his will, he feels a spiritual declension. One cannot set limits to these disagreeable qualities: they will not be monopolized. You might as well have a case of ship-fever in your house, and think that it would not spread. If one member of the family is selfish, you will not be apt to find the rest self-sacrificing and disinterested. If one indulges in fretfulness and scolding, the rest soon begin to fret and scold too. The very children enter into the spirit which rules the household.

There are several practical reflections which follow from this view of the contagious nature of sin. One of the most obvious is, that it is wisest for us to keep as far as possible out of its way. Some think that they are strong enough to venture within the charmed circle of vice. It has no fascinations for them. They are in no danger, and they want to widen their experience by an acquaintance with the evil as well as the good of life. At best, it is a foolish and a dangerous experiment. It can do no good, and it may do extreme harm. There is but one thing which will render it safe for a man thus to be familiar with sin and the sinful; and that is, to go among them, not from curiosity, but with the earnest purpose to do them good. This Christian purpose is the only antidote to the contagion.

It is the dictate of self-interest, as well as of humanity, to cleanse the community of this infectious element. It is not safe for us to leave it to itself: we cannot tell where it will spread. You may say, "It is none of my business to look after the vicious and degraded; if they lie and steal and drink, it is their own lookout, not mine, so long as they do me no harm." Ah! but the contagion may come into your family; your sons may come under its baneful influence, and fall beneath it. It is nothing to us, the rich may think, that the poor

are living in squalidness and filth: let them better themselves, if they can. Yes; but by and by the cholera sweeps through those dirty hovels of Broad Street; and does it stop there? No: the malaria passes thence to the palace on Beacon Hill, and preaches there the great truth that all men are brothers. It is nothing to you, do you say, the physical condition of the poor man? Yes: it is something to you, so long as you can take the cholera or the fever from him. Is it nothing to you, that men will sink themselves in vice and dissipation? Yes: it is something to you, so long as those dearest to you have no infallible prophylactic against the infection of their vice. These Ministers at Large, these Children's Missions, these Washingtonian Homes, these Sons of Temperance, all, in their way, aim to reach and to disinfect this element of contagion; and so they are to be sustained not merely as a requirement of Christian philanthropy, but even as the dictate of an enlightened self-interest.

This fact, too, of the contagious nature of sin, gives us a hint in respect to the proper mode of influencing young persons and others to follow the paths of virtue. We can do this better by placing before them the beauty of goodness, than by holding up to their view the hideousness of sin. It is said that the Lacedemonians used to intoxicate their slaves, that their pitia-

ble condition might be a warning to their sons, which should keep them from intemperance. I doubt the wisdom of such a course: it may have had a tendency to increase the very evil which it was designed to prevent. It is better to hold up examples which you wish men to follow, rather than to press upon their attention those which you wish them to shun. They might never have thought of these, unless you yourselves had brought them to their minds; and mere familiarity is dangerous. On this account, it seems to me that our newspapers often do an injury to the community by publishing the full details of atrocities and crimes: at best, it only gratifies a prurient curiosity, and it may stimulate and awaken the desire of imitation in some readers, which might otherwise have slumbered. I would say the same of works of fiction which have villains for their heroes: they are wholly injurious in their tendency. To descend even to a smaller matter, I doubt the advantage of that whole class of books, designed, with the best intentions, to teach juvenile morality, but which would do this by showing the evil consequences of sin. Such are stories of bad boys, who came to a bad end; boys who lied or stole, or broke the Sabbath, and suffered in consequence. Children are natural imitators, and the bad things told will remain in their minds long after the moral designed to be taught by their punishment

has vanished. Let them have examples which are safe to follow; examples of self-sacrifice, obedience, and truthfulness. These appeal to what is noble and generous and good in their hearts, and are sure to call out a response. Allure them to good: the evil they will find out soon enough without your help.

But there is a brighter side to this subject. We must remember that good is contagious, as well as evil. If a selfish person can lead those about him, by the unconscious influence of his character, to selfishness, it is equally true that a single act of self-sacrifice may thrill a nation, and lift it up to nobler aims. If fretfulness and discontent will spread from one to another in a family, till, of that baneful quality, the whole be leavened; so does genuine cheerfulness and hearty kindliness draw to itself other hearts. Bring up against the subtle poison of vice the over-mastering power of steadfast virtue. Overcome evil with good. When these two are parties to the contest, the victory is not doubtful.

MORALITY IN BUSINESS AND POLITICS.

THE object of most of our business arrangements is to make money. There is no harm in that, provided we do it in an honest

and Christian way. But I fear that the great principles of morality and religion are not acknowledged in the length and breadth of their application. The main current of business does not reach as high a level as it should. It is sometimes transformed into a game of chance. The success which ought to be the rightful reward of skill, industry, and energy, is sought for by the shorter cut of rash speculation. Men make haste to be rich, and are not contented with moderate and sure gains; but they embark in enterprises in which there are many blanks and few prizes. There is commercial gambling, where the cards played are landscrip and railroad stock, and the dice thrown are bales of goods and barrels of flour.

And, moreover, there is a disposition to overlook frauds, in proportion as they are perpetrated on a great scale. We are somewhat dazzled by the magnificence of the villany; a stupendous defalcation is almost an object of wonder. We send to the house of correction the poor woman who steals an umbrella; but the defaulter to the amount of a million and a half, while people are opening their eyes in astonishment, quietly pockets the proceeds, and takes the steamer for a tour in Europe. There is some truth in the old comparison of justice to a spider's web, which catches only little criminals, while it lets the great ones through.

A man should do the upright act because it is upright, and then thank God if it happens to be also profitable. Integrity should be the beginning and the end of business, its underlying principle and its constant manifestation, its foundation and its superstructure. If a man cannot stand uprightly, then let him fall uprightly. If he cannot live honestly, he can at least starve honestly. He should not act on the motto, "Make money at all events: honestly, if you can;" but, "Be honest at all events, and make money if you can."

And the lack of principle also manifests itself in politics. The very name has come into bad repute; and a professed politician would be looked upon by most persons as a suspicious character. But why is this? Politics is a noble science; a study which might task the mind and heart of the greatest man. It is balancing the rights and interests of all the different parts of the country, so as to promote the good of the common whole. It might furnish exertion for the most comprehensive intellect, and the most quick and sensitive conscience. To be a true politician requires the best qualities of mind and heart. If our politics were of this elevated stamp, there might still be parties. For honest and strong-minded men do not always see alike; and particular measures do not strike all minds in the same

way. Unity of opinion might not, indeed, exist: but there would be one thing even better than this; and that is, unity of desire to promote the good of the country. With this we might feel safe, into whatever hands the government might fall; we might feel sure that all would be well.

This, we would fain believe, was the case in the early days of the republic. But how sadly are things changed! What now seems to be the moving spring of politics? I can see little else than self-interest. Who looks out for the good of the country? The offices, from the President down to the custom-house porter, are considered, not places where the country is to be served, but rewards of partisan zeal, or bribes when important elections need such help. They are prizes in the great lottery of politics. There is to be a grand scheme drawn on next November. The first prize is twenty-five thousand a year, the franking privilege for life, and the title of President. And so on downwards. There are all varieties of prizes to suit different tastes. There are post-offices, great and small; custom-house appointments, foreign embassies, and consulships; memberships of the Cabinet for the ambitious, and collectorships of ports for the covetous. All these are to fall on the one side or the other, with the turn of the wheel, on November next. What a sad state of

affairs it is; almost too sad to be the subject of ridicule! How melancholy a perversion of the noble theory of republican government!

Just imagine, that principle were at once made the ruler and director of politics; and that each of these five million voters were looking round and seeking for light as to what, not his own interest, but the good of the country, required; that each of the hundred thousand expectant demagogues were by miracle purged of selfish motives, and changed into sincere patriots. What a transformation would ensue! Just think of it: such an anomaly as a man seeking office, because he really wished to serve his country! A politician declaring himself for an unpopular measure, because he believed that it was salutary and necessary! We are so used to the opposite state of things, that the supposition bears the mark of absurdity on its face. Why, you would think the man crazy, or would perhaps suspect that he had some concealed motive, and was only the deeper and shrewder knave.

HONESTY IN TRADE.

I BELIEVE that honesty commands at least as much premium as gold does now in the market. Take the trade-mark of some articles,

which through years have gained the reputation of being made upon honor. The article with that stamp commands, by a definite per cent, a larger price in the market than another, which seems as good, but has not been proved. When the manufacturer puts his label on his cloth and his thread, if it is the name of a man of tried honesty, that voucher for its being up to the standard of quantity and quality makes a heavy addition to its value. Such goods are more sought, and are more valuable.

I believe, that, in our country, we over-reach ourselves often, in our haste to be rich. In Europe, a manufacturer makes a good article, and the business is handed down from father to son, perhaps through many generations; each keeping it up to the standard, not from honesty merely, but from interest. The good name is better than riches. They would rather throw away many thousands of dollars of material, than bring the quality down to a lower standard; for their business reputation is worth more than they would gain. I am afraid that our way often is, first to gain a reputation, and then to use it for palming off an inferior article on the public for temporary profit. It is not a wise way, I must believe. Honesty and lasting success go together.

GOD'S WILL MUST BE DONE.

IT is a vain task to fight against God. All the weight of human power and wealth may be against a cause; it may be despised by the great of this world, and hated by the powerful; those who advocate it may be scorned and derided of all, as were those humble men, who, in that proud city of Antioch, in derision were first called Christians: but if it be God's cause, it must succeed. In the single might of his will, it must prevail, whoever be for it, whoever against it. God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. And the only question is, shall we be fellow-laborers with him, or shall we engage in the vain attempt to thwart his purpose? Take courage, humble Christian! Whatever comes to you as God's will, labor for it, though you be alone. Ask no questions of a worldly expediency, if once you be satisfied that it is God's purpose. You must know that it will come to pass, though all of earth roll its weight against it. The solid earth shall be crushed as dust, if it is before the chariot-wheels of the Omnipotent. The stars in their courses were said by the Hebrew prophetess to fight against Sisera, the Lord's enemy. God's will must be done; and woe to him who stands in its way!

DEDICATION OF A NEW HOME.

DEUT. XX. 5: "AND THE OFFICERS SHALL SPEAK UNTO THE PEOPLE, SAYING, WHAT MAN IS THERE THAT HATH BUILT A NEW HOUSE, AND HATH NOT DEDICATED IT?"

IT is a solemn occasion, if we regard it aright, when a family enters for the first time its new home. What shall pass in those rooms which now echo to their footsteps? Look on! joys how sweet are there! duties how pressing! Perchance weariness and pain and sickness shall chasten the household. There, shall be unveiled the great mysteries of birth and of death; there, shall the sacrament of marriage fill loving hearts with rejoicing; and from that open door the weary pilgrim shall be borne to his last home.

And look on still farther! A hundred years have passed. Those hearts which were so full of hope are all still now. The fire has gone out on the hearth-stone; the sob of the mourner and the laugh of the child alike are hushed; and no sound is heard in those deserted chambers. All of us who now live will have taken the pilgrim staff, and journeyed on. God grant that it may be to the "many-mansioned" home of the Father! The old home is in ruins. But the spiritual home which we have dedicated, still stands, only transplanted. Be it dedicated to

God and to Christ, and the wreck of worlds cannot harm it. Sorrow and tears and death may be the portion of the household; but the blessed home stands sure. The fire cannot burn it, nor the waters of many sorrows destroy it. The love which there has been cherished, lives for ever. Every prayer breathed up, God has taken; every sacrifice of a mother's love, every duty faithfully done, every burden cheerfully borne, he has garnered. The ploughshare may go over the ruins; but still is left "the building of God, the house not made with hands," as ours was, "eternal in the heavens."

FAMILY DEVOTION.

WOULD it not have a hallowing influence on your days thus to begin them; and from the morning prayer would there not come to your home a new sacredness? Some weeks ago, it was my privilege to spend a few days in the home of one of the merchant princes of the metropolis; a member of a firm whose name is known and honored throughout the land. It was almost a touching sight, as, on Sabbath morning, the father took down the well-worn Bible, and read a passage from the Holy Book; and then all, parents and children, kneeled together in prayer. Must not that home have

needs been purer, holier, more influential to all good, for that morning prayer? God was unmistakably acknowledged in that family as its Sovereign and its King. And those children would quickly understand, that not only they were taught to say their prayers, because this was good for children, but that he whom they respected and loved most, felt it needful and right himself to pray. That single example to those children throughout all their lives would be worth volumes of exhortations, as a motive to devout and Christian living.

Entering, then, on the day, the uncertain day, the day of temptation, of work, of trial, come first to the ever-present Friend, and seek his help. And, when the night comes, again bow the knee to Him who "maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice;" asking for forgiveness of its sins, a blessing on its work, and his watchful care through the night. Thus, my friends, let our life on earth be kept near to heaven; thus let each day be begun, continued, and ended in God.

SACRIFICE BEGETS LOVE.

WE love those objects which have cost us something. The more we do for an object, the better we love it. Did you ever notice

which of a family the mother seems to love the best? Is it not always the weakest, the most sickly, the very one which requires the most of her care and work and sacrifice? Be there one which has some physical disability, upon that one is the wealth of affection lavished. The more we do, the more we sacrifice for our children, the more they cost us, the better we love them. And let us notice here the practical inference, that, if we would have our children love us, we must teach them to do what they can for us. Weak indulgence begets love for themselves, selfishness, and not affection for us. Let them do for you, as well as you for them. Let them make their little sacrifices, and find their reward in your happiness. Let them learn from the beginning to minister, as well as to be ministered unto, if you would have their love for you strong and deep.

AMUSEMENTS AT HOME.

DO parents consider sufficiently the importance of making home attractive? Is not amusement often sought everywhere else except there? A pleasant home is, I think, the greatest outward safeguard you can throw around your children. People are too apt to forget that

they were ever boys and girls, and to expect children to be as sedate as men and women. If they succeed in this, it is ruinous: either the spirit and the fire are all suppressed, and the children, like fruit ripe before its time, are good for nothing; or, as is more often the case, the pent-up steam is gathering strength for a fierce outburst at some day in wild excess.

Let children enjoy themselves at home, if it does sometimes make your head ache. You have not done your whole duty in this respect, if you have provided wood for your sons to saw, and plain sewing for your daughters to do, though these are well in their place. You do not want them to feel that home is a place only for the hard and wearisome work of life, and that, for pleasure, they must go away from it. Have it such that when they go abroad to enjoy themselves, as it is good for them sometimes to do, they may feel, that, after all, they have just about as good a time at home. We cannot make it too happy a place. It is well worth the trouble and thought required, if we succeed in making this the bright spot for a human life.

Let the children play at suitable times; encourage them and help them to play; best of all, play with them. Thus you get a double gain. You can entirely direct and control their amusements without any conflict of wills; and not

only unconsciously lead them in the right way, but attach them to yourself by so doing. While they enjoy having their parents with them in their pleasures at home and abroad, by the unconscious influence of the parents' presence all excess and all wrong are kept away without any direct interference. And it would do us as much good as it does the young. It helps us, to keep up our interest and connection with them. It keeps us from growing old. What more beautiful sight, than a heart still beating youthfully beneath the frosts of age?

I have no fault to find with any amusement pursued in moderation, if it be merely innocent in itself and in its surroundings. You may say that it does no good. It does good, if it is merely innocent recreation. We need that. God knew what he was doing when he planted this desire, and it is good to work it out in any innocent way. For my part, I rejoice when any new and innocent source of enjoyment is opened among us. I hail it as one more help to you, young people, in leading you in the path of virtue; one more inducement for you to shun the road, which so many have followed, down to ruin.

FAITH, THE LESSON OF SPRING.

LET us learn from this season of Spring a lesson of faith; or, rather, let the implicit faith we show here in things material, shame us into a deeper faith in things yet more important. Who is infidel, sceptical, unbelieving, now? With what immovable, undoubting trust the world leans on its God! What faith in the heavenly Father is shown every spring-time! If I were called upon to point out an example of the most entire and unwavering faith, I am not sure that I should not choose it from the fields instead of the churches.

This is not a matter of comparatively small moment. Just see where we stand. The world lives from hand to mouth. We raise just about enough in one year to feed us till the next harvest, and but little more. What if, for one single year, God should let his blast come on the crops of the whole earth? It would involve almost the extermination of mankind. The human race would be like those extinct creations whose history we trace out in the rocky record of our globe. Let there be two months of pouring rain, let there be two whole months of scorching heat, and where are we?

And yet, while we are on the verge of destruction, what faith in God's providence! How

vital! how real! A faith which not only governs our acts, and leads us to sow our seed, but which even governs our feelings, and keeps us from the slightest shadow of anxiety. What one of us, during the last week, as we planted our farms and gardens, had the slightest distrust of the result? Not a shadow of doubt ever passed through our minds.

Let us accept the teaching, and carry our faith to yet higher and nobler and more vital issues. We have trust in God, that he will repeat this year the miracle of the budding rod. We trust him, that he will not let seed-time and harvest fail from the earth. We trust him, that he will give to these physical frames their daily bread. It is the same God who rules in the affairs of the soul, and in the experience of life. If we can trust so implicitly in his wisdom and goodness with reference to our material interests, if we are sure that he will take such tender care of our bodies, how much more can we have faith in him, that he will take care of our souls, which are so much more precious in his sight! Let us give to him here the same undoubting faith, the same unquestioning trust. He may lead us in dark paths; but he can see, he knows the way. Rejoicing or sorrowing, living or dying, it is the Lord; and we can trust him.

So in this beautiful spring-time of the year, when all nature seems to be lifting up its hymn

of praise to God, may we draw nearer to him whose hand is busy with blessing all around us! May we be willing to sow for him, and patiently wait his time for the harvest; and, in trusting faith, yield ourselves to him, our Guide, our Preserver, our Father!

TRUST IN GOD.

SOME of you have taken that exciting, that apparently perilous voyage down the rapids of the St. Lawrence. At the head of the last and swiftest rapid, we stopped for a moment to take in a pilot. Four men took their station with him at the wheel. We turn into the swift current. The boilers are urged to their utmost capacity, and the full head of steam is on, that we may get steerage by moving a little faster even than the swift stream. We are borne along with appalling velocity; we can see the slant of the water, and feel the descent as we plunge downward. As we stand at the bow, when our speed is the greatest, near the end of the long rapid, we see, just before us, two huge black rocks, with hardly the steamer's width between them, just emerging from the boiling tide. At this fearful speed, through that narrow passage we must pass. A few feet on either

side is destruction. We hold our breath, perhaps lift up a silent prayer, and in a moment we are safely through. He who had brought us there knew the way; it was his business to carry us through; he was equal to the emergency. We trusted to him, and were safe.

So, in life, we have not to steer our own course. The Almighty Pilot is at the helm. Dangers and difficulties seem to be before us: but he who has brought us into them knows all about them; and he will carry us safely through, if we only trust.

WE are all much more willing to work than to trust. Do you doubt this? It is so much so, that usually God's only way to teach us to trust in him is by the lesson of sickness and deprivation and loss; by placing us where we cannot help ourselves, and then saying, Trust in me now, and find how strong and ready I am to help. It is often only as a last resort when we are helpless and powerless, that we turn to the Father in heaven, and seek strength from him. And thus we have to be taught that lesson of far-advanced Christian experience; thus learn that "his strength is made perfect in our weakness."

It is worth all it costs, even to learn it thus; but how much more we should accomplish, if we could only join these powers together, and seek God's help at the same time that we make our strongest efforts! We shall work better because we also trust; and only when we are doing our best do we find that we can fully and implicitly trust. God's help is strong, and man's work may be strong; but man's work reinforced by God's help is invincible.

INFIRMITY AND SICKNESS.

PERHAPS there is nothing harder to call blessed than the physical disabilities and imperfections which weigh so heavily upon some persons. But these may be even the richest blessings. When Walter Scott was a boy, he was afflicted with a lameness which rendered it impossible for him to join in the active sports of his companions. Probably his mother wept and prayed over this disability of her son. It seemed so sad that her child should be shut out from so much enjoyment, made useless as a boy and as a man, and his sphere narrowed. But the boy, to avoid being left alone, began to tell stories to his companions, till, at last, they would all leave their sports to come and listen

to him. Thus, through this very infirmity, he was led into the path of future usefulness and fame.

Who does not recall, on the other hand, the sad story of one of the greatest geniuses of England, who, stung almost to madness by the corroding sense of a bodily imperfection, wasted his noble powers on unworthy aims, and almost cursed God, and died? God meant that infirmity to be a blessing to him. By it he would have weaned him from his inordinate vanity; he would have curbed that fiery and ambitious nature, and taught him by weakness the true source of strength; through that thorn in the flesh, the Father would have saved the spirit of his child. He spurned, with loathing, what, in God's purpose, was the best of all his noble gifts; he perverted the blessing into a curse.

Contrast Byron's embittered and defiant spirit with that of, I might almost say, England's greatest man, who had learned, in the school of Christ, to bear the Father's will. When an antagonist reproached Milton with his bodily infirmity, he replied: "It is not so wretched to be blind as it is not to be capable of enduring blindness. There is a way to strength through weakness. Let me, then, be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit, as long as in that obscurity

in which I am enveloped the light of the divine presence more clearly shines: then, in proportion as I am weak, I shall be invincibly strong; and, in proportion as I am blind, I shall more clearly see. Oh that I may be thus perfected by feebleness, and irradiated by obscurity! And, indeed, in my blindness I enjoy, in no inconsiderable degree, the favor of the Deity, who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. For the divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not, indeed, so much from the privation of my sight as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings which seem to have occasioned this obscurity, and which, when occasioned, he is wont to illuminate with an interior light, more precious and more pure." This grievous infirmity, than which we cannot imagine one more distressing, thus devoutly received, was, indeed, a great blessing, as he used it. It led him into the ordained path. As with a flaming sword, it barred against him the pursuit of politics and statesmanship to which he so much inclined, and gave to us the noblest epic of modern times. Milton, the secretary of Cromwell's council, would long since have been forgotten, had not Milton the poet kept his name in memory.

I will mention but one more of these blessings,

sometimes unrecognized because of its sober garb, which yet is often the crowning mercy of a lifetime. Sickness, long and wearisome, may be the angel of blessing. Who has not seen its blessed ministry, when accepted in a devout and Christian spirit? I have seen under its discipline the character grow fuller and stronger, at the same time that it was growing more trustful; and, for every joy that was taken away, a tenfold greater was brought in, till the sufferer could say, from his heart, that those last years were his happiest, though they were years of weakness and pain and apprehension. God deals wonderfully with his children, and often through sickness lifts them up into the fuller radiance of his presence, which makes up a hundred times for what it takes away.

The Messiah comes oftenest to us, as he was said to come to the Jews, in the "clouds of heaven." My friends, have you not found that sometimes, when you thought you were bearing the heaviest burdens, you were unconsciously entertaining angels unawares? The time will come to us all, when, as we look back, we shall estimate all things at their true value. And it will be well for us now, while we are passing through the experiences of life, to take them on trust at that estimate. We must remember that every thing which God sends he means for blessing; and it will be blessing, if we do not wrest

it from its purpose. And so we can learn with each new experience, difficult or sorrowful as it may appear, still to trust in him, and to say with Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" feeling all the while, what the patriarch did not feel, that God's evil is always good, perhaps the highest good.

USES OF ADVERSITY.

WE are too near events to take a comprehensive and a just view of them. As we climb a rugged mountain, how barren, unsightly, and ugly the way seems! but, as we look back from the distance upon that same road, it seems to be the gem of the whole landscape set in the rock, and fringed with the sombre evergreen. Life is too short often to give us this comprehensive view, which adjusts the respective places of all things. We need the perspective of time and distance, even to assign to the experiences of our own lives their fitting relations.

Yet, seen or unseen, the Father is with his children; our ways are in his hand. And often the means which he uses to direct us are circumstances which we count misfortunes, annoyances, calamities. Perhaps we have never fully

comprehended what was our place and work in the world. We are, perhaps, too easily contented with our situation; we would plod along in it day by day and year by year, doing comparatively little for ourselves and others. But the Father sees powers in his child which need to be called out, and a wider work which he is capable of doing. Against his will, with bitter lamentations even, the quiet, pleasant nook in which he had ensconced himself as for life is broken up; and he mourns that he is turned adrift. It is the Father's way of leading him to the higher opportunities of growth, to the wider field of usefulness. It is not misfortune: it is the highest blessing.

The biography has just been published of one of the most eminent historians of our country, and perhaps of the world. His life is most instructive. When he entered college, his aim was simply to be a gentleman. He deliberately resolved upon the number of the college exercises which it would be sufficient for him to attend, and the number of parties and entertainments in Boston each week in which he could safely indulge; and he made it a matter of conscience, if he varied at all, to take less of study, and more of pleasure, than he had bargained for with himself. What bridges over the gap between a character like this, light-minded, pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent, and the self-

denying, conscientious, hard-working religious man whom we all delighted to honor? This in his Junior year, in some little disturbance in Commons, he was struck in the eye by a piece of crust thrown at random, which cost him the total loss of one eye and great weakness of the other. As far as we can see, this determined his course, and gave the world, instead of a polite, handsome, refined, useless gentleman, a splendid man of letters, a great historian, and to the Lord Jesus an humble disciple.

TRIALS AND BEREAVEMENTS.

IS one good and faithful, and is this a reason why God should make his path smooth and easy before him? Nay; it is the trees that bear fruit which we prune: we do not take the pains to prune those which are worthless. The pebbles of the sea-shore we never polish: it is the gems only which are worth that labor. And so whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and, if there be any who are nobler, purer, and richer souls than the rest, it is these very ones, the best beloved, whom he chastens most, that he may purge all the dross away from the fine gold, and fit them for their high place near him. The heathen may see in trials and sufferings the

wrath of an offended Deity: the Christian must look upon them as the sign of the divine love, and as the very stamp of acceptance with the Father.

It is easy to talk of our dependence on God; but, in prosperity and health and strength, we do not feel how dependent we are. It is when, one after another, the earthly props on which we have rested are swept away, that we turn to Him who is mighty to help. One would think, that, when we have the most joys, we should naturally be the most grateful; but I believe it is not so. We are so busy enjoying that we really forget that we have much to be thankful for. There may be to-day more of grateful praise for blessings spared, going up to God from hearts bowed down with sickness, than from those in the full enjoyment of health. And, as for contentment, I have, through long months of weariness and excruciating pain, listened in vain for one single complaint from the patient sufferer; while perhaps in that time I have heard hundreds from those whose lot seemed all that heart could wish.

Do we shrink from the hard discipline, and think, that, if God loved us, he surely would provide some easier way for gaining this needful growth? Nay, my friends: we are not alone in this. We know not how much of what we love best and admire most in human characters is

but the natural fruit of this same hard teaching; lessons shrunk from at the time as evil, and yet looked back upon as life's greatest blessings. And, when the trial for us or for those we love is so hard that our faith almost wavers, then let us turn to the Father's best beloved, our Master, and remember that even he became "perfect through suffering."

From every sorrow which you receive in a spirit of Christian resignation, from every pain you bear patiently, from every great trial you bravely meet, there silently passes to those about you strength and comfort and encouragement. Without saying a word, you are exhorting to faith and patience and trust; you are inspiring in others the Christian spirit, and building them up in the Christian life. Have you never come from a sick-room, where life was slowly wearing out by a painful and hopeless disease, a terrible trial bravely met; have you not come away, feeling stronger for bearing your own burden? Is not this the thought on your mind: How wrong is it for me to complain of my little pains, and murmur in my little trials, while she can bear with so much Christian patience, without a single murmur, her crushing affliction! It is even so. From suffering come some of our best lessons. Trials and sorrows and pains, more or less heavy, must come to us all; but, "beloved, think it

[illegible] concerning the fiery trial which is [illegible] though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are [illegible] Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

THE loving Father shows because of his very love, when his kindness cannot awaken affection in return, lest the breath of his mouth fail in our wrath, and the flights come on our wings: lest his knife prune away the thorns which are choking up our souls: yea, takes the purest treasure of earthly affection into his own bosom, that our hearts may follow them up thither. Just as the Alpine shepherds, as is told in a beautiful poem, when they wish to lead their sheep away from the worn-out pastures below up to the sweet and juicy grass which grows among the mountain cliffs, take the tender lambs in their arms and carry them thither; and though the path leads over rough crags, and across chasms, and by the verge of precipices, yet the sheep cannot stay behind, but must follow where their lambs are gone; so, does the good Father do with us.

SUFFERING AND DEATH.

MANIFOLD are the means which God uses to draw us nearer to himself, and to build us up in true manhood and into fitness for the higher life: sorrow and joy, pain and blessing, just as we need, and as he who is All-wise sees to be best for us. The diamond may have lain for ages in the river-bed, with the waters gently rushing over it; but still, in spite of this, coarse and rough, like any other pebble of the shore. The lapidary must grind it on his wheel, before it shows forth its full beauty and value. So the common experiences of life may pass over us, leaving concealed all the hidden beauty and wealth of our nature; and suffering must come to bring out what is best in us. God has tried one thing and another, and they do not refine and develop fully the soul of his child. And then in love, with firm but merciful hand, he puts it on the wheel of suffering and pain, that it may be made a fit jewel for the crown of the great King. Thank God, then, for sorrow! Thank God for sickness and pain, if through these stern teachers we may only be led nearer to him!

Did you ever think what is God's purpose in usually sending sickness before death? Is it not to smooth over the hard passage for those who

go and for those who stay? I never knew an instance of one called to leave this world before he felt willing and ready to go. It may have taken months and years of preparation; but the willingness came at last. And sometimes it is not willingness to die, but willingness to live, which is the test of Christian faith. And the prayer from the weary heart is for patience to wait God's time. One half of the lesson of life for us is, to learn how to obey God; and the other is, to learn to trust in him.

But what is death? Why should the voice be hushed into a whisper when we speak of it, as if its very name was a shape of terror? Why should we think of it as something out of the course of God's ordinary providence, something strange, mysterious, awful? Let us try to think and speak of it, as those to whom faith in Christ gives the victory over death! I rejoice to believe that more cheerful, and at the same time more true and Christian, views are prevailing in the community; and that, if not this generation, yet our children, will be delivered from its needless fear. It seems as if our forefathers felt as if it were a sin to associate any thing but gloomy thoughts with a subject so solemn. Not long ago, I visited the spot where the dust of my ancestors rests in the old churchyard. Desolate and bleak on the northeast exposure of the hillside, with scarcely a

tree to cover its barrenness, was the place which they had chosen to lay away the dust of noble men, and Christian wives and mothers, and darling children, whom God had called home. How many hearts have ached almost to breaking, as they left their best treasures behind in that cheerless resting-place, and nature could whisper no word of comfort to them! How different the feeling as we pass along the streets of yonder city of the dead! Solemn, sad, it may be; but the very air whispers of rest and peace to the departed, and of comfort to the living. The mountain graveyard and sweet Auburn,—types of the false and of the Christian view of death! For what is death? It is only God's way of taking us from this state, which was never meant to be permanent, to a better and a higher home. That may be a very serious thing, but it cannot be a fearful thing. What is the fitting preparation for it? The best and only preparation for dying which I know of is, living; living Christian lives of duty, and serving God. That is all, and that is enough. If we only do that, we can safely leave the rest with him.

What change does death work in our characters? Of itself, no change at all. It is but an event, changing our relations, not ourselves. Heaven and earth are but parts of one and the same life. The first hour of heaven is joined

on to the last of earth; nay, I believe they blend together. What is the smile of more than earthly peace, which often lights up the face of the dead, but the stamp with which the departing spirit has impressed on the cold clay its first glimpse of the blessed world? And what are the visions of angelic forms and the sounds of celestial music which often fill the last hour with rapture, but the withdrawal of the veil of flesh and the opening of the spiritual eye to what is all about us unseen, the twilight of the heavenly glory? We can believe now: we shall know hereafter.

WHAT is death? The subject seems naturally to divide itself into two branches: it is a physical fact, a bodily experience to be passed through by each one of us; and it is also an event in the plan of God, a crisis to the soul of man. It is obvious that the first is only the outward form; the other constitutes its real meaning, and is that which alone makes it of pre-eminent importance. It can be then looked at from the stand-point of the body and of the soul.

I. Let us ask, first, what is the physical change which we are to experience in death?

We can only answer this question fully, when we ourselves have passed through it. The sight of the dying does not explain it, and the dead have no voice to tell their experience. We must judge, then, as well as we can from appearances and inferences. We can infer from these that death is no object of peculiar and mysterious terror, but one of nature's quiet and gradual changes. The animal powers, worn out by long use or enfeebled by severe disease, become weaker and weaker; all the faculties are benumbed; the limbs, by degrees, lose the power of motion; the heart beats more faintly and fitfully; the breathing is irregular; you can scarcely feel a quiver of the pulse; and then all is still. Exhausted nature has ceased her work; the animal life has expired, as the lamp goes out when the oil is spent. It is no sudden tearing away, no violent separation, but the gradual exhaustion of the powers of the body: it is this only which is involved in the process; and, when the garment of flesh thus falls off, the spirit is not changed, but is only divested of its mortal covering. We called this change a process: is there any reason for supposing that dying must be instantaneous? Are not the years of old age a part of dying? If the sight grows dim, and then is lost, is not then the sight dead? And as one faculty after another loses its quickness and activity, is not

this a part of the mortal change? And even at the last, I believe that there is a time when whether one is in the body or not he cannot tell. The separation is gradual; and our friend, who seems to us to be in mortal agony, may be even then partly in the other world: while the body is suffering, the spirit may be having glimpses of the glories upon which it is soon to enter.

And often, we know, the dying speak of the brightness which surrounds them; and their face lights up with rapture at what seems to them to be a foretaste of the eternal life. Like the martyr Stephen, "they look steadfastly up into heaven, and see the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." I know not how it is with you, but I cannot believe that all these celestial visions, which often brighten the last hour of the righteous, are mere creatures of enthusiasm. I believe they are really seen; and I rejoice in them as confirming what seems to me, not only the most pleasant, but also the most rational, view of the great change.

I think, also, that appearances and facts do not warrant the common view, that intense agony always must accompany the process of dying. It does not seem consistent with known facts that it should be so. Anatomists tell us, that the nerves of sensation are much more

abundantly distributed on the surface of the body than in the vital organs. It seems reasonable to infer from this, that an injury to these last would not cause so intense pain. And it is probably true that every one endures many times through life much more violent suffering than he must in death. All the powers of the body must then be deadened, and the delicate nerves of sensation must partake of the general torpor. Probably to an infant it would be more painful to be born than to die. I believe, as a general thing, that death comes without a pang; that it is gentle and easy. There may be suffering and sickness before it; but, at the last, it is rather a falling to sleep than acute pain. Our Saviour said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;" and Stephen is said to have "fallen asleep," though he died in the agony of a cruel martyrdom.

Are we not in danger of letting what takes place after death throw back a shadow upon our views of the event itself? The dismal shroud; the black pall, with which, as in mockery of our Christian faith, we cover the bier: how much do these add to our dread of death, and deepen its gloom! And yet we should not allow them to do this; for they are no part of the thing itself, but only its scenery. Does it not seem, that, as a physical change, we have surrounded death with needless terrors?

We see no reason to believe that it is an exceptional and frightful event, but simply the wearing-out and exhaustion of the bodily powers; and they die, only because they can live no longer. Neither should we consider it as an event of unspeakable agony; but we should rather use that favorite image of the Scriptures, and call it "a falling asleep."

II. We have thus answered the question, What is death to the body? Now, what is it to the soul? what is it to us, the self which lives in the body, and which, we believe, shall live as truly after the mortal change? Though God has given to the soul life for ever, yet he has also ordained stages in its eternal progress, and varieties of discipline. This is one of them. It is the point of the soul's rising to its higher state. It pleased God that this should be done by the putting-off of the body in which it dwelt on earth; and so, when the time for this advance comes, the body is laid aside, it dies. Is there any thing fearful in this? Is it a terrible thought, that this world is not sufficient for us, and that we have natures capable of infinite expansion? Yet this is the meaning, this is the event, of death. And must they not feel thus who have passed through this great experience? They do not think of its pain, of its terror: they do not say, "I died then;" but, "Then was I born into the family in heaven."

It is the spiritual birthday. It marks the period when the discipline of earth ceases to be of benefit to us, and we go from it to a better. It is like the fall of the blossoms. Something which is very beautiful perishes; but all which is really valuable remains, and from that time begins to develop itself more quickly. The leaves fall away, that the germ they enfold may grow up into the higher form of fruit.

And in death we do not lose any thing which is of value, any thing which has not answered its purpose. We carry with us all which is ourselves, our thoughts, our memory, our character, which we have hewn out by the rough instruments of our earthly life. We leave those instruments behind, because they are worn out, and can no longer do us good; and we go to use those which are more perfect, and with which we can add to the beauty and completeness of our work.

We ought to accustom ourselves to think of death from this point of view, rather than dwell so much upon the physical change. This is the only thing which is of importance to us, which concerns our inner selves; and, in this light, it is full, not of gloom and terror, but of confidence and joy. It is solemn indeed, but not terrible. What is there fearful in this rising of the soul to its higher destiny? Only one thing, the thought of a misspent life, of abused privi-

leges, of wasted discipline. Truly, "the sting of death is sin." This we should fear and loathe as much before as afterwards. If a man dies wicked, it is only because he has lived wickedly.

The important thing here is, not death, but life; not when and how we shall die, but how we have lived, and how well fitted we are for the upper state into which we shall enter. Why, then, is death so terrible to the righteous? We do not go beyond the government of God; we do not leave behind us his protecting care, his fatherly love. It is indeed a solemn thing to think that our friends have passed through one stage of their everlasting existence; but why should it excite in us feelings of vague, superstitious horror?

And we should let our children's earliest impressions of death be these. We should connect with it in their minds what pleasant associations we can; we should speak of it hopefully, and not in despair; we should talk of the dead as living, as in truth we believe they live. We should not speak or think of death with levity or indifference; for it is indeed a solemn and momentous change to us. But there is little danger of our doing that. Neither should we go to meet it with a heathen dread, with a mysterious awe. It is not Christian to make death the "king of terrors;" for

have we not believed in one who has overcome death, and given us the victory through his blessed name? Let us take comfort in this sure belief, and not live, and not sorrow, "as those who are without hope!"

IMMORTALITY.

BEFORE the time of Columbus, philosophers had reasoned about the existence of another continent. They believed, perhaps, that the ocean which washed the coasts of Spain might not be boundless to the west. And this belief may have gained some credence among the people. But what certainty or assurance did they have of it? To what did it all amount? What was this guess, this dream, of another world, to the kings and philosophers and people of Europe? Nothing. Columbus went thither, and returned. And this dim belief, this theory, this dream which had lain lightly on the minds of men, settled down into a firm conviction; it was clothed with all the strength of reality.

This is just the change which has come over men's thoughts of immortality. What was the dim theory before, is now the firm conviction. The traveller has been to the undiscovered country, which philosophers had reasoned about, and

the common people believed in. He has returned; and it is no longer undiscovered, but our far-away home, where mansions are waiting for us. This stormy sea we must one day traverse. But it will not be wholly in fear and dread. It is not shoreless. We have a confident assurance that there is a home for us beyond it, and the humblest of us may set sail with an unwavering faith which the greatest of antiquity knew not of, because to us "Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

DO you recollect that thrilling instance of self-sacrifice? how, when the last boat was just cutting off from the wrecked vessel, in that awful hour the mother refused to leave behind her husband and her child; and, when death came to one, clasped in each other's arms they sunk in the surging waters? Now, is it possible that the love which at one moment was so intense that it absorbed every other feeling, even the desire for life, in another moment ceased to be? Is it possible that a moment of time could work this change in human souls, though it were the moment of death? Sooner would I believe that the waves annihilated the immortal spirits of those loving ones than that it quenched their

mutual love. And so it must be with all earthly affection, which is true and earnest and pure. Death cannot destroy it; for it is stronger than death. The grave cannot chill it; for it lies not there with the body, but lives for ever. And we may believe, that, as those on earth get ready their homes and open their hearts for the unconcious child which is yet unborn, so for us, in sickness and in death, are the dear departed watching, ready to receive and to welcome the new-born heir of heaven to the celestial mansions.

THE END.

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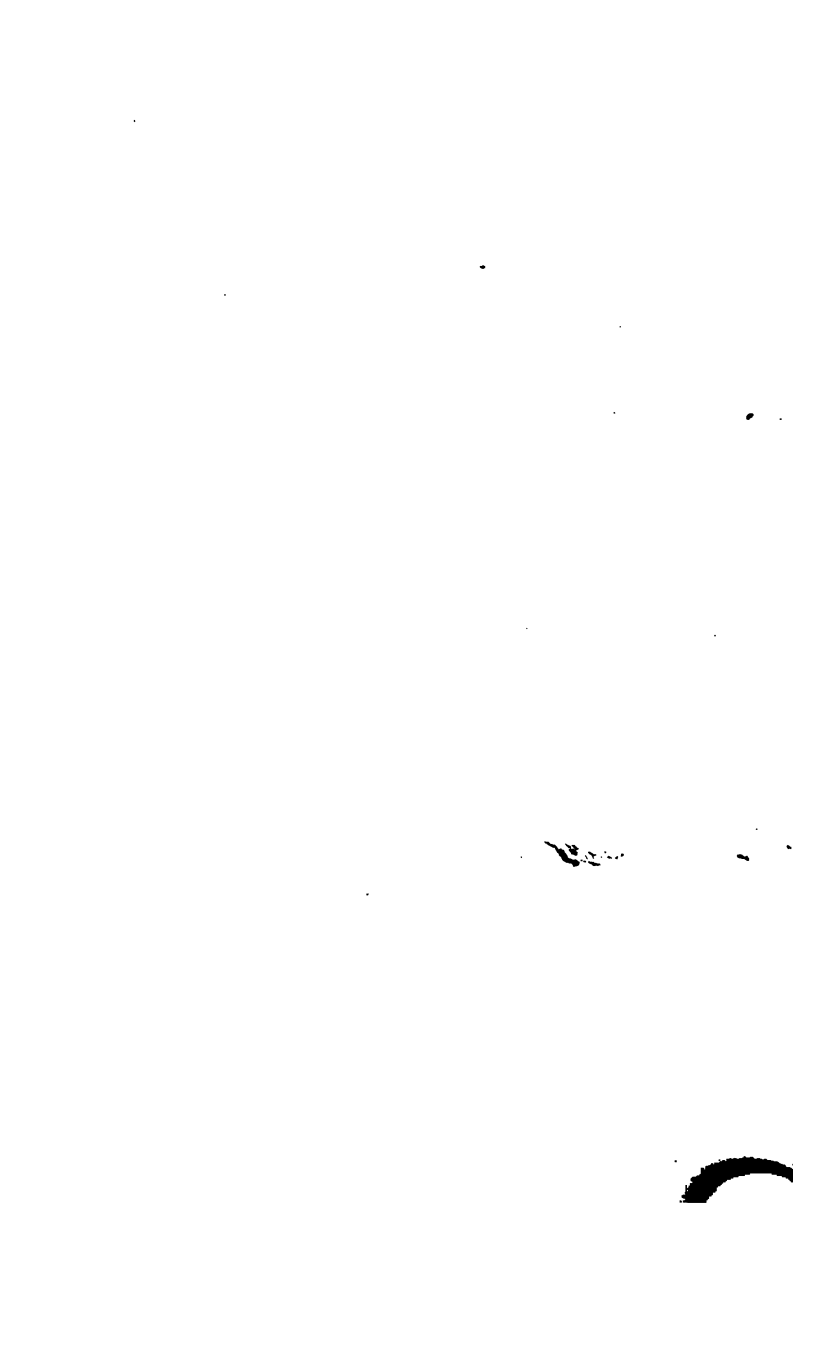

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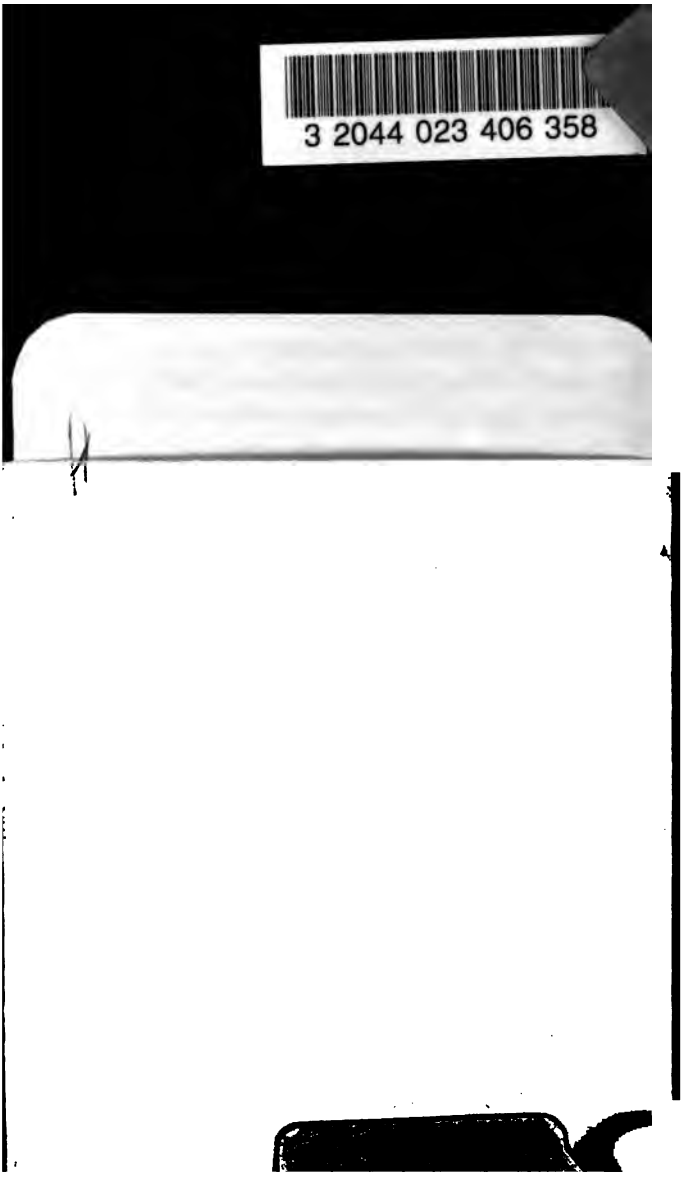
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